CHRIST AND HIS FRIENDS

LOUIS ALBERT BANKS

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Christ and His Friends

A SERIES OF REVIVAL SERMONS

BY

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"The People's Christ," "White Slaves," "Revival Quiver," "Common Folks' Religion," "The Honeycombs of Life," "The Heavenly Trade-Winds," etc.

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To

MY FRIEND,

FRANCES E. WILLARD,

WHOSE LOFTY CHARACTER, CHRIST-LIKE OPTIMISM, AND

DAUNTLESS COURAGE HAVE BEEN MOLDING FORCES IN MY LIFE,

THIS VOLUME

IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE sermons in this volume were delivered in Hanson Place M. E. Church, Brooklyn, N. Y., during the month of January, 1895, in a series of revival meetings. It will be noted that the texts and themes are all selected from St. John's Gospel. The themes were selected some months prior to the delivery of the discourses, and such time as could be spared from the regular work of my ministry was devoted to the work of outline, Scriptural study, and the gathering of illustrative material from all sources open to me. When the time arrived, after a few hours' study during the morning of the day in which the sermon was to be delivered, it was first dictated to a stenographer, though it was afterward in the evening preached without notes. The entire thirty-one sermons were thus at last forged and delivered during that earnest campaign. The blessing of God was on them when they were delivered, and by the aid of the

gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, they were made "the power of God unto salvation" to a great many, who hearing them believed. I send them forth now in this more permanent form with the earnest prayer that they may bring comfort and inspiration to the friends of Christ wherever they may go.

LOUIS ALBERT BANKS.

BROOKLYN, *April 25, 1895.*

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CHRIST AND HIS FRIENDS.

I

THE HERALD OF CHRIST.

"There was a man sent from God whose name was John."
—*John* i. 6.

JOHN THE BAPTIST is one of the most interesting characters in the story of mankind. More is told us about his birth and babyhood than concerning almost any other character in the Bible. And after that we know nothing at all until we find him a full-grown man coming out of the desert, preaching in the wilderness, not coming to the towns and cities to find a crowd, but drawing the eager multitudes away from the cities into the desert, by the force of his ideas, the power of his eloquence, and, above all, the spirit of Almighty God upon him, which made those who listened to him believe that he was a messenger from heaven. It would be hard to find anywhere a more striking picture than we have given us in the scripture narrative concerning the ministry of John the Baptist. The desert, the wilderness, his rough

camel's-hair raiment, his food of locusts and wild honey, his utter recklessness of personal risk, the atmosphere of intense reality that surrounds him, the perfect genuineness of the man, making him speak to the very last letter the message that God had given him, whether it be to the unthinking crowd of peasants, the rude soldiery, the formal Sadducees, the hypocritical Pharisees, or the guilty Herod on his throne,—all these are characteristics full of the most intense interest. And then in connection with this independence of character his faithful obedience in making way for the coming of Christ, his utter abasement of himself and his pretensions in the presence of Jesus, show him to have been a man of most remarkable spiritual insight and of the noblest character. Indeed no one who studies carefully the story of John the Baptist can refrain from acquiescing in the declaration of Christ that "among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist."

There are some characteristics of the ministry of John which I wish to study with you. The most notable perhaps is its positive character. It was this to which Christ called special attention in a public address to a crowd of people who had listened to his conversation with John's disciples, who had come to see Jesus with a ques-

tion of their master who was then shut up in prison. After they had gone away with that wonderful answer of Christ as to his Messiahship, "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them," he turned to the crowd that thronged about him now, but that only a short time before had gone out into the wilderness of Judea to hear John, and said, "What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?" Notice the irony of our Lord's question. "What went ye out into the wilderness to see?" that is, "ye took long journeys, ye were at great pains to see John, ye left your homes and went out into the wilderness—for what? to see some frail reed shaken by the wind? to see some weak trimmer to the popular breeze?" The irony of the question is its own sufficient answer. It is as if the Lord had said, "John the Baptist was no reed shaken by the wind, and you went out not expecting to find him such, for if you had so regarded him you would not have gone out to see him."

It is altogether a mistake to suppose that the world is unwilling to hear an intensely earnest and positive religious discussion. There will

more people go to hear that than any other kind of discussion whatever. For, after all, the only one thing in which all mankind is interested is the great question of the salvation of the soul. There is that deep down in every heart which leaps up into restless activity in the presence of any special manifestation of religious power. This is at least a latent force of the soul of every man and woman in the world. It is not lost through any lack of cultivation and it does not disappear under any degree of education. And let any special religious manifestation aroused by a positive presentation of the divine message take place, and all classes fly with curious anxiety to behold it. Infidels and skeptics, Pharisees or hypocrites, it matters not, all men fly to behold this phenomenon that at least promises hope for the soul.

After Catherine Booth had been for a while in Paris organizing the Salvation Army among the poor, she hired a fashionable ball-room not far from the grand opera and went there to preach the gospel in the simple, plain, straightforward way that has given the Salvation Army its mighty power. All Paris was stirred. The boulevard without was blocked with carriages bringing ladies dressed as for the opera. Gentlemen in evening dress, gold eyeglasses, glittering dia-

monds, and all the other necessaries that go to make up a society fop in Paris, accompanied by the jewelled women, painted and powdered and dressed up to the latest fashion, crowded every available seat.

When the Salvationists appeared upon the platform opera-glasses came into great requisition, and laughing comments came from all sides. But when Miss Booth knelt to pray silently for a few minutes, in perfect wonder the audience rose and gazed at her. "Is she sick?" asked one lady, and when answered, "She is praying to God," there were exclamations of wonder at the regardlessness of dress that made her willing to kneel down in the dust. Her subject was, "Has God left Paris?" At first as she spoke, upon the faces of the audience would be a look of amused wonder, fans would be fluttered, glasses in use, and that false simpering smile that is put on like a mask in society, would hide the real heart feelings. But after a while, as the power of God could be felt through the straight yet tender words of the speaker, they would for once forget themselves and be lost in the subject; fans would be folded, glasses forgotten, and the mask would drop, leaving on those faces a look of weary longing, showing that the heart beneath had not been quite deadened by the false joy and empty folly of the Paris world. Some of the ladies,

who had not come prepared to weep, were, however, unable to keep back their tears, which washed away the rouge, and as they wiped away the tears they wiped the paint with them, making their handkerchiefs red and their faces pale.

And this plain, simple, straightforward, positive message of man's sin and God's willingness to save through Jesus Christ, had the same effect among the poor in that wicked city of Paris. Mrs. Ballington Booth tells of the first convert Catherine Booth made in a miserable little hall in the poorest part of Paris. She made her way to the back of the hall one evening and sat down beside a poor, dissolute working-woman. She put her arms around her and asked if she did not want Jesus as her friend and Savior. And when there was no answer her heart broke, and she looked into the poor woman's face and exclaimed, while her arms were still about her neck, "I love you," while her tears fell upon the hard-worked hands. That melted the heart which no amount of preaching would have broken, and before that night was over the woman had found salvation and peace in the blood of Jesus.

Depend upon it, the same message backed by the Holy Spirit when given by us will have the same effect. I pray God for the spirit of John the Baptist, for the spirit of Catherine Booth, that

shall make this gospel message real to us, and give us the courage and faith and love to carry it to the people who are within our reach in these days.

During the ministry of John, which was attended by great multitudes, there were some classes whose excitement very much astonished the bold preacher. He was not astonished when the publicans came to him, but when he saw multitudes of Pharisees and Sadducees coming, he exclaimed in wonder, "Ye generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" The Pharisees were mere formalists. They were very strict in fulfilling the letter of the law, but they did not have its spirit. They were selfish and hard-hearted. They would argue a question of tithes as though it were a question of life and death, but they had no mercy for a broken heart and were ready to stone a hungry man who rubbed an ear of grain between his fingers on the Sabbath day. As Frederick W. Robertson says, "They had shrunk away from all goodness and nobleness, and withered into the mummy of a soul." May God have mercy on the religious mummies that are stored up in our churches. If there are any religious mummies in this church, I pray God that his Spirit may arouse them to life.

The Sadducees were materialists. They were

the reaction from the Pharisees, just as in a later day such men as Voltaire were a reaction from the Romanism of their time. They saw through the hollow formalities and miserable sham of pharisaism, but they did not see deep enough to behold that these were only counterfeits of the real coin of spiritual possibility. Because they saw that some men were hypocrites and frauds about religion, they blindly said that all is a sham. "There is no life to come—there is neither angel nor spirit. And this glorious thing called man, with his deep thoughts and his great, unsatisfied heart, his sorrows and his loves, godlike and immortal as he seems, is but dust animated for a time, passing into the nothingness out of which he came." That was the creed of the Sadducees, as it is of such men as Ingersoll to-day, who try to feed their hungry souls on dry husks. And what astonished John was that these antagonistic classes, one wedded to its formalism, the other denying everything, both crowded around this stern prophet of the wilderness, each seeking to know how "to flee from the wrath to come." The truth is, as Frederick Robertson has well said, no self-righteous formalism or morality will ever satisfy the conscience of man, neither will infidelity give rest to the troubled spirit. It is a great lesson, if we will only study it thoughtfully and earnestly, to

watch these two classes going together to John's baptism. Evidently the heart of man, which the moralist tells us is so pure and excellent, will not stand the light of day. The fact is, it is not pure, but corrupted and polluted and restless. If not, what has the Pharisee to do with the symbol of a new life which he goes to John to find. Neither is the clear, unbiased decision of the intellect, of which the materialist has boasted, a satisfactory trust. In the light of day he beholds his intellect warped by an evil life, his heart restless and dark and desolate. If not, why does the Sadducee beside the Jordan tremble like a man with the palsy before John's heart-searching message?

The secret of it all is that neither of them are satisfied. There is a something which both Pharisee and Sadducee want, and they come to see if John can give it to them. How powerfully they must have been aroused and convicted of their sins before they could bring themselves to make this open confession of the hollow mockery of their trust. One can almost imagine himself standing at the water's edge and hearing the confession which is wrung from their poor quivering lips as the hot tears course down their cheeks and their voices are choked with sobs, during that solemn hour when the conviction is forced home upon them that they are poor, lost, condemned

sinners before God. "It is a lie." We hear them say: "We are not happy, we are miserable and despairing. O prophet of the invisible, tell us, if you can, about that awful other world toward which we hasten. Tell us, if you can, how we may find forgiveness for our sins, how we may make our peace with God."

My brother, that picture is not overdrawn; it is easy enough in the midst of health and strength and a thousand blessings and pleasures given you of God, but for which you have never thanked him, to draw the coat of your self-righteousness about you and quiet your fears. But when you shall come to front the everlasting God, and look the splendor of his judgments in the face, your self-righteousness will shrivel into tatters of filthy rags, such as Jesus describes in the book of Revelation. Oh, believe me, no skepticism, however logical its philosophy may seem to you, will soothe your conscience or rock it to rest with an everlasting lullaby. No agnosticism or worldliness can soothe the undying worm, nor quench the inward fire that smolders in the restless soul. Only through faith in Christ, the manifested love of God, can the soul find peace.

In conclusion, there are three or four characteristics of the ministry of John the Baptist which are of peculiar interest to us this evening, because

they illustrate our own duty at this moment. John was said to be a voice crying in the wilderness. He was a voice of protest against the sins of his time. He was a voice loud and clear, unequivocal, attracting the attention of men not to himself so much as to their own sins and the coming of Christ, the Savior. We too are to be voices crying in the wilderness. We are not to be partakers of other men's sins by remaining silent in the presence of iniquity, and we are to attract attention in every possible way to Christ, the Savior of sinners.

Again, John was a witness. He came to be a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ. And we are assured by Christ himself that he expects all his disciples to be witnesses for him. "Ye are my witnesses," says the Savior. How often we hear the phrase, "the cause of Christ." That is a legal phrase. When you utter it or hear it thoughtfully, a court room presents itself before your imagination, the judge sits on the bench, the jury are in their places, the lawyers are there to plead, but if it is an honest court, the issue depends more upon the witnesses than anybody else. Now the Lord Jesus Christ has a cause which is being tried in this world. He is plaintiff in the suit which has been pending for nearly nineteen hundred years, and though it has been settled by millions of peo-

ple in that time, it is still pending for millions more. He claims the race of mankind as his, because he redeemed it by his own blood. He claims all human hearts as his, because he died for them. Ministers of the gospel are only attorneys to prosecute his claim. I am here to-night not to present my own claim but the claim of my Master. And every Christian, old or young, is subpenaed as a witness in the cause of Christ. And we must testify whether we wish to or not. We are bearing witness one way or the other even while we are silent. We are in court all the time. The jury is watching us. The stenographers are taking down our evidence. The Savior is looking and listening, and a great record is being kept in heaven. O my brother, what kind of evidence are you giving for the Lord Jesus? How important it is that every one of us, not only with our lips but by our daily living, shall bear witness to the truth of God's word. He says that "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Are we so living that we have that peace? Is that loving and grateful acceptance of Christ the end with us of all worry and trouble? Are we going about from day to day "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation"? If not, we are false witnesses and do not sustain the cause of our Lord. Again he says, "My grace is

sufficient for thee." If this is true, then in poverty and loss of health and grief we should be able to look up into the face of our Heavenly Father and say with cheerfulness, "Thy will be done." Let us bring it close home to our hearts on this last night of the old year, and ask ourselves what kind of witnesses for Christ we have been this past year.

Then again, John came to prepare the way of the Lord, to make ready for the coming of Jesus Christ. John C. Fremont was called the great pathfinder, because he found a way over the Rocky Mountains and the Sierras into California, which was followed by the long wagon trains that came after him. John the Baptist was a pathfinder for Christ. Fremont only found the way over the mountains and around the rugged places. John was a representative of those who are to pull down the hills and build up the valleys and make a highway for the coming of the King. Does not this illustrate our duty at this very moment in relation to Christ? We are to prepare the way for the coming of Jesus into this community. If there is a person in our family who is not converted, then we are to seek in every way we can to open up a path for Christ into that heart. If there is a non-Christian family living on the block with us or about whom we know, then we must seek to invent

some method by which we may build a path into that family for the Savior. We must use our friendships, our business relations, and all the associations we have with our fellow-men as so many suspension bridges over which Jesus Christ may walk into their hearts and lives. What nobler, grander work can any man do than that? What a glorious thing it is to go about among men in this world, making friends, living in the spirit of kindness and love, in an atmosphere of such grace and Christly sympathy and brotherhood that we win men's hearts, and when we have won them introduce them to the Savior, who has made it possible for us to have this gracious and kindly spirit! What intense interest such a purpose adds to all human associations! Friendship, already glorious, becomes divine when it means not only the bond between two human souls, but the bringing of the friend also into fellowship with the Lord Jesus. Human love, the most glorious thing there is on earth, becomes more divine and precious than anything merely earthly when it is a golden chain that leads the loved one to Christ.

II

THE DIVINE-HUMAN CHRIST.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth."—*John* i. 14.

CHRIST is here called "the Word." Perhaps no other name given to our Savior in the Bible is more puzzling to the superficial observer, or the careless reader, but it is full of most blessed significance when we study to know its meaning. A word is the visible, definite, outward expression of the soul's inner thought or emotion. The psalmist said, "I believed, therefore have I spoken." In that case his word stood for his faith. Wordsworth says that "language is the incarnation of thought." Very likely the reverent poet got that fine saying from this chapter which we are studying, and from this name of our Savior. Christ on earth was the outward expression, which men could behold, of the thought, the heart, the love of God; hence it was said of him that he was God manifest in the flesh. As one has well said, a word is a very different thing from a sound, because it is the expression of intelligence and

affection. Mere sound may be soulless, but a word is the voice of the inner being.

This is a marvelously tender way of putting the incarnation of Christ. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." I think only John, the beloved disciple, could have put it in just that way. Why, at the very words, a home rises up before you, with the bright fireside in the evening, around which are all the loved faces, and with them, most beloved of all, is the Son of man. "He dwelt among us," literally in the old language it meant, he pitched his tent among us, lived with us just as one of us. No other word could be used that would mean more than that word "dwell." Where a man dwells he makes himself known. He may wear a mask when he is traveling, or when he appears before the public, or when he transacts business, even when he is visiting; but where a man dwells, people know him, and his real self comes out in his home.

So Christ, leaving all the glory he had with the Father before the world was, leaving the home of many mansions with its riches unbounded, came down to our earth, and was born among us, among the average people, among the every-day common folks. He might have been born in a palace. He might have come in the full glory of manhood, leading legions of angels in his train, but he chose

to be born in the manger at Bethlehem, in the home of humble toilers. How close this brings Christ to us! Thank God that, as the writer of Hebrews expresses it, in the scripture lesson which I read, "he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." I like that little touch where he says that he sought "to be made like unto his brethren." That comes close to my heart. That he wanted to be like me, so that he could understand my troubles and my weakness.

This is the most marvelous thing in all the world, that he who had infinite riches, for our sakes became poor; that he who had all power in heaven and in earth, retaining his divine power, came down and was born in Bethlehem as the child of a poor carpenter; became a part and a parcel of our humanity, just as completely wearing our humanity as the little child that sleeps in its crib in your home to-night. He who was God became a little babe and was subject to his parents, and grew in wisdom and stature, and toiled day

after day in a carpenter shop, and went about with Joseph carrying his rude tools to repair the houses of their neighbors, in that little town of Nazareth. He grew weary and tired. He became hungry and thirsty. He made friends. He loved and hoped and rejoiced. He bore pain and heart-ache and loneliness, and died. He did everything that we do except to sin,—oh, how close this brings the Savior to us! Once on the mount of transfiguration, when the inner glory of the Godhead shone through the veil of the flesh, the disciples fell to the ground before him. Again on the resurrection morn those rude soldiers from Gaul, who feared neither man nor devil, fell like dead men on every side. And yet for three-and-thirty years he dwelt among us. He talked with us. He opened his heart to us. He shared all our trials. He who was God over all became tenderest brother to rich and poor, ruler and peasant, high and low, the good and the bad. His was not the kind of goodness that frightened bad people away from him. How can we ever thank God enough for the condescension of the Lord Jesus!

Brother, this is the Christ I bring to you tonight. One who had all riches and yet came and shared your poverty. Have you had a hard year? Have you been out of employment? Have you scarcely known how you would make both ends

meet? I bring to you the Savior to-night who made all the gold in the mountain fastnesses, and came down from heaven where the streets are paved with gold, and took upon himself such poverty that he was able to say of himself, with all truth, "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

Do you have weariness? Are your burdens too heavy for you to carry? Do you come to the end of your day's work tired and worn out? I bring to you the blessed Savior who, possessing all power in heaven and in earth, came and took upon himself our weakness, came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and wore out his life, in all humility of love, that he might know how to sympathize with every tired soul through all time. How much it means when the Savior stands before you in your weariness, knowing himself what it means to be tired out, and nervous, and sleepless, and says with inexpressible tenderness, which it is impossible for my voice even to suggest to you, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Are you in the midst of temptation? Has the devil seemed to make a very set at your soul? Does he lure you with his lying fascination and fiendish persistence day after day? I bring to

you the Christ who was tempted in all points like as you are, and who endured the agony of it on purpose that he might know how to succor you in your temptations. I bring to you that loving, gentle Savior who was hungry and faint, and beset by the devil, in the wilderness; on the pinnacle of the temple; on the mountain-top, and in the garden of Gethsemane, where the great drops of bloody sweat stood out on his forehead in the convulsive agony of trial. He it is that comes to you and says with all love, "Lo, I am with you, even unto the end of the world." "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid; ye believe in God, believe also in me."

But it is not only that the Lord Jesus came and dwelt among us in the flesh for three-and-thirty years; but ever since that time he has been coming in a new incarnation to multitudes of human souls all around the world. One has said there are two Christmas days to every Christian, the day when Jesus was born in Bethlehem and the day when Jesus was born anew in his heart. No Christian can ever forget that glorious second Christmas dawn.

The supreme evidence of the divinity of Jesus Christ rests not merely on the historical fact that Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, and did live the life recorded in the gospels, with its miracles

of mercy and love, and was raised from the dead in mighty power, though there is nothing in history that has been substantiated so perfectly as that.

A story is told of Lépaux, a member of the French Directory, that with much thought and study he had invented a new religion to be called "Theophilanthropy," but was disappointed that it made no headway, and complained to Talleyrand, the great statesman and wit, of the difficulty he found in introducing it.

"I am not surprised," said Talleyrand, "at the difficulty you find in your effort. It is no easy matter to introduce a new religion. But there is one thing I would advise you to do, and then perhaps you might succeed."

"What is it? what is it?" asked the other with eagerness.

"It is this," said Talleyrand; "go and be crucified, and then be buried, and then rise again on the third day, and then go on working miracles, raising the dead, and healing all manner of diseases and casting out devils, and then it is possible that you might accomplish your end!" and the philosopher, crestfallen and confounded, went away silent.

This incident shows in a very striking way the impregnable foundation on which Christianity

rests. One of the most distinguished jurists of the world has said that if human evidence has proved, or ever can prove, anything, then the life and miracles and resurrection of Jesus Christ have been proven beyond the shadow of a doubt.

But, convincing as all that is, it does not compare, to my mind, with the great fact that Christ has been born in my glad heart. That he came knocking at the door of my heart when I was a sinner, and when with trembling faith I opened the door, he came in to dwell there. Ah, that is the mightiest evidence that could ever be adduced! The incarnate Christ in men and women, living his life of grace and truth there; lifting them out of anger, and hate, and lust, and sin of every kind, and making them live anew the gracious life of the self-denying Christ on earth,—that is an evidence which no man can ever refute.

When Mr. B. Fay Mills was holding meetings in Philadelphia, a man came in one evening wounded and bleeding. He was one of the roughest of the rough, who a few minutes before had been in a saloon fight and was so horribly beaten that he fled to the meeting-house to save his life. He was one of those men who had lived his whole life, from his very babyhood, in rough and wicked associations. He had never in his life opened a Bible. And while in this place of refuge he lis-

tened to the truth, the Holy Spirit touched his heart, and in the agony of his conviction for sin he began to cry out in the anguish of his soul, "God have mercy upon me, a sinner!" That night the Savior's pardoning love was manifested to him, and the peace of God turned his agony for sin into thanksgiving for forgiveness. He left the house a new man in Christ Jesus. And now comes that divine wonder of wonders that has been repeated so often. This man, restored to his right mind, and rejoicing in the pardoning grace of Christ, began at once to work for the Savior. All his hatred toward the men who had beaten him was gone. And he went straight back to them to tell them of his new-found hope and joy. They listened in amazement, and sixteen of the roughest men in Philadelphia within a few weeks were through his instrumentality brought to Christ. No mere man could do that. It was the ever-living Son of God born anew in that man's heart.

Mark Guy Pearse, the great English preacher, tells of a Cornish fisherman named Moses, who had found the Lord Jesus Christ and was constantly alive to every opportunity to do something for him. One day he was out herring-fishing, and another boat got foul of his nets, and the man in the other boat began hacking away at the nets, swearing horribly. Moses said calmly, "Don't

swear, it hurts me to hear you;" but the man went on worse than ever. Not long after, one day when the swearer was drinking in the saloon, or public house, as it is called over there, there was a heavy sea on, and his fishing-boat got loose. Moses happened to see the boat drifting about, so he put out at the cost of a good deal of hard work to himself, and brought her in, and put her safe. When the owner came out and realized what had been done, he said to Moses, "What did you save my boat for?" "'Cause I couldn't help it." "What do you mean? I cut your nets to pieces, and now you save my boat." "Aye, I'd do anything for you." "What do you call yourself?" said the swearer. "I call myself a Christian," said Moses. "I never saw one before; what is that?" "That is a man that can love his neighbor as himself." "What, you love me? you have broken my heart," and flinging his arms around Moses's neck he burst out crying. And after that there was not a better man sailing out of that harbor than that man who had been a drunken, swearing bully.

Mr. Pearse relates the story of still another of these Cornish saints, which beautifully illustrates the power of the divine Christ incarnate in us. A man named Anthony had been converted, and his wife was very bitter about it. To use the man's own words," When I found the Savior, she said to

herself, 'I will set to and see how much that man can bear,' and when I saw what she was about, I said, 'Lord, I will set myself to show her how much thy grace can do.' She went on bit by bit, till she became what you might call aggravating. I used to get up and light the fire, and I said, 'Lord, let the fire burn with thy love;' that would preach her a sermon. Then I used to clean her boots, and I said, 'Lord, let the boots shine with thy grace.' Then I turned to fill the pitchers at the well, and said I, 'Lord, let 'em brim over with thy love.' I thought, that will preach her a sermon—there's firstly, secondly, and thirdly. Then I went out and filled the kettle, and I used to say, 'Lord, let it boil over with thy love.' That went on for some months, and one Sunday evening I was praying for people at the service, and before I got home it was eleven o'clock at night. When I came home my door was shut, bolted, and barred, and the wife was gone to bed. She would not let me in. I felt at first like having that door down, but I looked up to the elements, and went to the hedge by the churchyard, and there it seemed the Lord came and stood by me. I seemed to be talking to the Lord all the time, and I waited and waited, and at half past two my wife came out sobbing and said, 'Anthony, can you forgive me?' I said, 'My dear, I have nothing to

forgive.' She said, 'Don't say that; kick me, do anything to me.' I took her by the hand, and we went home and knelt down in our kitchen, and the Lord put his grace in my wife's heart, and we have been very comfortable ever since."

No mere man could do that. But it is just like our Christ to help poor tried souls to do things like that. It is this glorious Christ, divine yet human, God over all, yet brother forevermore, that I preach to you to-night.

II

THE LAMB OF GOD.

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."—*John* i. 29.

THIS text is one of those sublime and splendid pictures so full of condensed truth, so rich in the very gold of the Word of God, that one is discouraged in the outset at trying to preach about it. For it is impossible for the most eloquent man who ever lived to add anything to the beauty or strength of this magnificent utterance of John. I can only hope to cause the picture which it brings before your mind to revolve in your thought; to cause you to look at it from different standpoints, and try like John to hide myself and any thought of my own while you "behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Perhaps we may serve this purpose the better if we begin at the last part of the sentence and pursue it steadily to the opening. "The sin of the world." What a significant statement that is, and yet none could be more true. That the world "lieth in wickedness" is the universal testimony of history, which is constantly emphasized by our

personal observation. The awful fact of sin, the disaster which it works in human life, the moral disease and degradation which it brings about in the very nature of the soul itself, is at once one of the saddest and most important themes for our consideration. Many try to escape the consideration of it, and shrink from the subject when it is pressed home upon their attention. And yet nothing is so unwise, no folly is so great or so dangerous, as to permit ourselves to be blinded for a moment to the doom that must come upon the sinful heart.

Dr. Charles S. Robinson tells the story of a traveler who, crossing the frontier of a certain country, had to pass the custom-house. The officer said to him, "Have you any contraband goods?" He replied, "I do not think I have." "That may all be true," said the officer, "but we cannot permit you to pass without examination. Permit us to search." "If you please," said the traveler, when the examination was over, "will you permit me to tell you what thoughts this examination has awakened in my mind? We are all travelers to an eternal kingdom into which we cannot take any contraband goods. By these forbidden things I mean deceitfulness, anger, lying, covetousness, and similar offenses which are hateful in the sight of God. For all these every man

who passes the bounds of the grave is searched far more strictly than you have searched me. God is the great Searcher of hearts. From him nothing is hid, and in that kingdom, as in this, every forbidden article subjects a man to punishment." God help us to search our hearts to-night, in the light of the Holy Spirit, for wicked thoughts, and unholy desires, and sinful appetites, and unrepented sins, that cannot pass the gate of the kingdom of heaven.

Another serious mistake that we sometimes make is excusing ourselves, and thinking somehow we will be excused finally, because our peculiar sins are not so outbreaking and shameful as some of our neighbors'. The very essence of sin is the disobedience to God, the rebellion against God's law, the refusing to give him our love and our devotion as children. We must not think that because our sins are popularly described as little sins, that there is therefore no danger that they may poison our nature to the very death. When the great traveler, Henry M. Stanley, was pressing his way through the forests of Darkest Africa, the most formidable foes that he encountered, those that caused more loss of life to his caravan and came the nearest to entirely defeating his expedition, were the little Wambutti dwarfs. So annoying were they that very slow

progress could be made through their dwelling-places. These little men had only little bows and little arrows that looked like children's playthings, but upon these tiny arrows there was a small drop of poison which would kill an elephant or a man as quickly or as surely as a Winchester rifle. Their defense was by means of poison and traps. They would steal through the darkness of the forest and, waiting in ambush, let fly their deadly arrows before they could be discovered. They dug ditches and carefully covered them over with leaves. They fixed spikes in the ground and tipped them with the most deadly poison and then covered them. Into these ditches and on these spikes man and beast would fall or step to their death.

One of the strangest things about it was, that their poison was made of honey. Let us learn the lesson of these little dwarfs. The devil is said to come sometimes as "an angel of light," and how many sins there are that he administers to his victims in honey! There are many people in Brooklyn to-night who are not being slain by outbreaking and shameful public sins, but are being pierced to death by poisoned arrows. Beware of the honeyed fascination of sin. Remember that all sin is under the ban of God, and if a thing is wrong in the sight of God, no amount of pleasure

in the doing of it can make it right, or save it from the awful punishment which belongs to sin.

Now it is to the sinner that this wonderful declaration of John comes: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Have you been conscious as I have been speaking to-night that you are a sinner? Then I bring for your consideration this great remedy for sin —"the Lamb of God."

The figure is one of exceeding interest. John may have had one of two or three things in his mind. He may have been thinking of the old Jew, under the Old Testament dispensation, who brought his lamb to the altar, placed his hands upon its head, and after he had offered a prayer presented it to be slain as a sacrifice in his behalf. By presenting his lamb he confessed his sins and acknowledged the justice of the penalty. Possibly John was thinking about that, and that Jesus Christ was coming as the Lamb of God to be a sacrifice once for all, for all men. Or it is possible he may have had in his thought that awful night in Egypt, when the warning had gone out among the Israelites everywhere, that in the midnight the death-angel would pass throughout the land, and slay the first-born of every household, save where the blood of the sacrificial lamb had been sprinkled on the lintels of the door. There

the angel would pass by and the loved one would be spared. So John said to his disciples and the company which stood about him: "Here is the Lamb of God, provided by his love and his mercy to take away the sin of the whole world, wherever it shall be sprinkled upon the sinful heart." Thank God, this atonement is not limited or exclusive. It is for every one that will accept it. Christ takes away the sin of the whole world in the same sense in which he takes away the sin of a single one. He gave himself as a "ransom for all." He did not do as governors do sometimes, on Thanksgiving or Christmas day, grant a pardon to one or two prisoners specially selected in honor of the occasion, but he opened the prison doors to all that are bound, and made it possible for us to preach deliverance to the whole world of captive sinners. Only one condition is made, and that is the acceptance. Free as the water at the hillside spring or at the river's brink, to whosoever will stoop down and drink.

How triumphantly the inspired writer exclaims, "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." How that sweeps away every thought of limitation! As one has well said, to propitiate is to satisfy. Sin had so offended against the just and holy law of God that he could not extend grace or

forgiveness to any. But Christ, by the gift of himself, made it possible for God to be just and yet the justifier of him who accepts the free gift of the Lord Jesus Christ. As Dr. Lowrey says, he did not pass over the earth, selecting one here and there as a favorite, but, stepping forward, he threw his bleeding arms around the whole world, and pressed it near his loving heart. He looked up to heaven with the world folded in his embrace, and claimed that his satisfaction was commensurate with the offense. The Father assented and smiled. Men are universally blessed with the possibility of forgiveness for their sins. May we, in the bosom of Christendom, point to the "Lamb of God" and say, "He is the propitiation for our sins!" The millions of our brothers and sisters in India to whom Bishop Thoburn and Dr. Parker and missionaries from all the world are carrying the gospel; the millions in Africa where grand old Bishop Taylor is telling the story of the cross; and the still more numerous millions of China, just beginning to see the light in the midst of their great darkness, have equal authority to rise up and respond, "And not for yours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

But lest some should fear that, though God remembers the great mass and multitude of men,

he has overlooked or forgotten them in their loneliness and despair, it is clearly stated that he is the "Lamb of God" for every single individual. "But we see Jesus," says the apostle, "who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." What a wonderful declaration that is! There is no chance to mistake its meaning. It is the divine assurance that Christ died for me, that he died for you and for every single individual in all the race. "As he hung upon the cross, the dead, the living, the multitudes yet to come were considered and loved and blessed. His omniscient eye swept over the graves of past generations, compassed the walks of living millions, and traveled down the stream of time to our day and to the end of the world. Then, with individuality of purpose, he raised the cup to his lips and 'tasted death' for all past, present, and future being of human kind." And when he cried on the cross, "It is finished," it meant that nothing stood in the way of any poor sinner in all the world finding forgiveness and hope and heaven, save his own will.

Brother, sister, do not lose sight of the tremendous statement, Jesus became the "Lamb of God" for you. Think it over; meditate upon it; how

can you sit hard-hearted and indifferent and fail to give him your love and gratitude, when you remember that it is for you that he was poor, that he was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"; that it was for you he was spit upon and insulted and crowned with thorns, and finally crucified upon the cross. It was for you! oh, how can you ever be indifferent again? A gentleman who was traveling in Norway tells how he went to see the church of a certain town. Looking up at its tower he was surprised to see the carved figure of a lamb near the top. He inquired why it was placed in that position, and he was told that when the church was being built a workman fell from the high scaffold. His fellows saw him fall, and, horror-stricken, rushed down expecting to find him dashed to pieces, but to their surprise and joy he was almost unhurt. This was how he escaped: A flock of sheep was passing by the church at the moment of his fall, and he fell amongst them as they were crowded together, and right on the top of a lamb. The lamb was crushed to death, but the man was saved. And so they carved the lamb on the tower at the exact height from which he fell to commemorate his escape. O brother, Christ was crushed to death under your load of sin. Shall you not give him highest honor? Can you resist the impulsive love and gratitude of your

heart that impels you this night to crown him Lord over all?

Anything less than your love is an insult to him. It is not like a debt for so much money which you can pay and be done with it. As Dr. Lyman Abbott says, there are some debts that never can be paid. We can only give back love for love. For instance, how shall a boy ever repay his mother?—the mother who, when she brought him into life, went down to the very gates of death herself, not knowing whether she would return or not; the mother who, through his babyhood, gave up herself to him that she might pour her life out into his; the mother who bore with his errors and imperfections; the mother who loved him back from his wanderings and his sins. How can he ever repay her for such love and sacrifice as that? He knows he cannot pay it: he can only go on loving her. Or how can the husband repay his wife?—who left her home, her friends, her very name, and took his name for her own, became his companion, bearing his cares more than he bears them, loving him not only for richer or poorer—that is easy—but for better or worse—that is often hard. How shall the husband pay the wife that has been his counselor and adviser, and filled him with her love and her wisdom? Ah, every true husband knows he cannot pay her, he can

only go on loving her. How can you pay the doctor that came into your house when your little child lay in the cradle, and your poor throbbing heart feared the cradle would become a coffin? But he watched it, and not only brought to you his wisdom, but his sleepless vigilance and care and love and skill and courage, until your child laughed again in your arms. You may pay him his fee, but your heart knows there is a debt that only love can make return for. And that does not even make return. You can only go on loving. How much more you must feel this when you look upon the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, and remember that he took upon himself your sins; that by his stripes you may be healed; that he bought your redemption with his own blood. Oh, how you insult him when you offer him anything less than your love, than your arms twined about his neck, than your affectionate and grateful testimony every day and every hour of your life! True, you can never pay him. But, thank God, we can go on loving him now and forever, until after a while, when we shall see him, we shall be like him.

We have only one word more left in the text, and only a single moment can we give it, and yet it is very important. "Behold," says John. Christ may be even at the very door of your heart,

but if you will not behold him you cannot be saved. These great truths which I have tried to preach to you to-night you have known all your life, and yet for some of you it would have been just as well if you had not known them, because there has never come a time when you have really beheld the Lord, and recognized in him your Savior. To you personally I would come, as a John the Baptist to your soul, and cry out the message of God's truth, "Behold the Lamb of God, who is willing here and now to take away your sins, and leave you clean and spotless."

Do not wait longer. Do not hesitate because you feel that your conviction of sin and the drawing of the Holy Spirit is not strong enough. When you come to Jesus and get close to him, you will see your heart in a clear light, and you will know as you have never known before what a terrible thing sin is. Do not wait for more feeling. If you were to fall overboard from the South Ferry, you wouldn't wait to feel colder before you seized hold of the rope that was thrown out to you. When Jesus told poor old blind Bartimæus to come to him, he didn't stop to ask questions or to delay. When the leper besought Christ to heal him and Jesus said, "Go, shew thyself to the priest," the poor fellow did not stop to consider whether he felt any better or not, but started at

once, and the record says, "as he went he was healed." The path of obedience is the path of salvation. On another occasion Christ was walking along the lake shore, and finding James and John looking after their fishing tackle he said, "Follow me," and without saying, "Master, we must consider awhile, we must not do anything hastily," they immediately arose and followed him—followed him out of their ignorance and their sin and uselessness and oblivion into goodness and usefulness and honor and immortal glory. Their destiny hung on a moment of time. They seized hold upon the opportunity and were saved. So I plead with you that here and now, without hesitation or delay, you shall with all your heart "behold," unto salvation, "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

IV.

JOHN, CHRIST, AND TWO SEEKERS.

"John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Master), where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see."—*John* i. 35–39.

In this suggestive incident we have portrayed before us very clearly the proper attitude of every Christian toward his own friends and the Savior. These men who were standing with John were his own personal disciples. How he had acquired an influence over them we do not know. Whether they had drifted with the crowd to hear him preach and had been impressed by that fiery zeal, that downright heart-earnestness, which every man that heard John must have felt, and had thus become his disciples; or whether they had become acquainted with him in some other way and had come to believe in his divine mission as the messenger of God to prepare the way for the Messiah, we do not know. The one thing we do know is

that they were John's friends. They were men that believed in him and loved him and were glad to be taught of him. His word meant more to them, no doubt, than anybody else's word in the world. And when these three were standing talking together Jesus passed along, and John turned to them again and pointed to Christ and said to these two disciples, as he had said before to the multitude, "Behold the Lamb of God." When his friends heard him thus speak, they paid John the highest compliment it was possible for their friendship to pay him,—they immediately followed Christ.

That which impresses me most in the study of this incident is John's fidelity on every occasion to Jesus Christ. He never loses an opportunity to glorify the Savior or to influence any friend or any one whom his voice can reach, and persuade him to follow Christ. Brothers and sisters, that is, as we will all admit, the true attitude of every Christian man and woman in the world. And yet how many times we seem to lose sight of it. There have been times perhaps in the history of every Christian here present when you have been greatly concerned for the salvation of souls, when you knew of some one who was not a Christian over whom you had some influence, and you were full of prayer and earnest desire that you might

speak the right word that would win that one to the Savior. Those were times of spiritual alertness, when your soul was sensitive to the presence of God, and it seemed easy for God to make known to you his desire. But at the present time, perhaps, there are many of you that do not feel that way. Now this does not intimate that you have not been a true disciple of Jesus in your purpose and that you are not now desiring to be a sincere Christian. But something has interfered, and that personal contact with the Lord Jesus Christ that made you once long to have a share in winning souls to him, and made it your very meat and drink to do his will in thus opening a way into men's hearts for him, you do not now enjoy. Oh, I pray God that it may come back to every one of us in greater and more blessed power than ever before!

I have been reading recently a great sermon by the late Canon Liddon, on the singular theme, "The Virtue of Elisha's Bones." Many of you remember the old story told in the second book of Kings, and also by Josephus, the Jewish historian, about the magnificent funeral of Elisha. He had been buried, doubtless in the old Jewish fashion, in a cave in the side of a perpendicular face of rock, the opening of which was closed by a heavy stone like that which closed the door to the tomb of

Joseph of Arimathea, where the Roman soldiers tried in vain to hold our Lord. Some time after Elisha's death, another funeral was being conducted near by, when the mourners saw in the distance a band of their enemies, an armed war party of Moabites. They wished to put the body for safety into the nearest hiding-place before this band of plunderers came upon them. It may have been accident or it may have been design, but it was probably because it was the nearest tomb, and they were in a hurry, that caused them to thrust the dead man into the sepulcher of Elisha.

The Jews made no use of coffins. At the end of the tomb Elisha's bones lay wrapped up in the covering that had enveloped his body. "Then," we are told, "when the man touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet." As I read it over again this week and Liddon's great sermon, it seemed to me that there was a message in it that we needed. If so, may God help us to receive it! Times of darkness and deadness, of spiritual blindness, come sometimes, even to those who have been tried and faithful servants of Christ. They no longer believe, or hope, or love, as they did once. They no longer pray as they did. The daily prayer in their family, the every-day secret devotion, the prayerful spirit, does not possess them as in a former time. Conscience is

left to take care of itself in a way which would have been impossible in times of more spiritual devotion and clearer vision. They do not think about God and the heavenly life. They do not meditate about the Lord Jesus and grow tender and tearful about it as was once so common. They do not read the Bible so much, and when they do read it, it is not so luminous with the Spirit of God as in earlier days. They do not attend church so regularly, and when they do not go there is not that spiritual hunger and thirst because of it that once made it such a sad loss to them to fail of regular attendance upon the house of God. The hope of heaven is not such an anchor to the soul as it was in those days. The hatred of sin, the fear of the judgment seat, and the awful doom of the lost soul, do not arouse the conscience as they did when the heart was throbbing in close communion with the heart of Jesus Christ.

Brother, does this picture the change that has been realized in your soul? Has a spiritual deadness come over you? Have mere phrases taken the place of deep convictions? Have the great, eternal realities—God and personal Christian experience, heaven and the immortal life—been crowded out of your affections by the things of the world? Is your spiritual life in a fair way to die outright; almost ready to be buried? If so, I

pray God that his Holy Spirit shed abroad in our hearts in these meetings, and the coming back to these earnest, heart-searching meditations about the awfulness of sin, about the death of Jesus Christ for us, about the necessity of the forgiveness of sins and the new birth, may be like the thrusting of the dead man's body against the bones of Elisha, and may bring back again all the old spiritual life and arouse you to the enthusiasm and zeal of your first love. Some of you, when you were first converted, took great joy in personally seeking after souls and pointing them to the Lamb of God. And the Holy Spirit made you skilful in doing it. But your tongue seems to have lost its cunning in that work. Oh, that it may be revived again!

I cannot tell you how I long for the full influence and help of every member of this church and of every Christian who attends these meetings in pointing men and women to the Savior during these days. Do you remember the Bible story of that little chariot ride Jehu had with Jehonadab? It was in a troublous time, and revolution was in the air, and there was a spirit of suspicion abroad about everybody. Couriers were riding to and fro, and people were dreading the outcome. A new order of things seemed to be imminent. Captains of the army rode with their swords in

their hands, and when one soldier met another, before he dared to trust him, he put to him the searching challenge: "Is thine heart right as my heart is?" It was a time like that, when every wide-awake, alert soul sniffed a tragedy in the air, that Jehu, driving with that furious haste which for more than twenty centuries has constituted a proverb, with his eyes flashing like lightning, and the bloody foam dripping from the bridles of his horses, came suddenly upon a figure the very opposite of his own, which stirred him very deeply. It was Jehonadab, a Rechabite priest, a stern mystic of the desert, a kind of John the Baptist himself, whose rough garments were a protest against the luxury and degeneracy of the times, and whose flowing beard over his broad chest spoke of the vows that were upon his soul. The stout arm of Jehu flung back his fiery steeds upon their haunches, and with eyes flashing on the face of the priest, like the snap of a whip, came the sharp challenge of his lips, "Is thine heart right, as my heart is right?" And as quick as a flash from the flint when the steel strikes it, comes the response: "It is." Over leans the soldier, as he exclaims, "Give me thy hand." And he lifts the prophet into the chariot beside him, and on through the dust they drive, soldier and prophet side by side.

A good, honest, blunt demand that was of Jehu. He had to have allies that he could trust. There comes a time in every man's life when he hears such a challenge in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. "If thy heart be right as my heart is right, give me thy hand." Every action of great importance requires this enthusiastic enlistment of the heart. And so, dear brothers and sisters, I look into the face of each of you anxiously these days, and ask, "Is thy heart right?" And if the response be, "It is," have I not a right to say in all frankness and assurance, for the sake of the love you bear Christ who redeemed you, for the sake of the sympathy you have for your fellowmen, for the sake of the brotherly love and fidelity which you owe to me, "Give me thy hand, with all the power of help there is in it"?

I know that I but dimly perceive myself the tremendous importance of the hour, the eternal destinies that hang on our devotion and fidelity; but God knows I feel it enough to almost break my heart, and I pray that he may put upon us every one a burden for souls that will inspire us to great sacrifices for his sake. The late Governor Geary, of Pennsylvania, was a good soldier in the rebellion, and he tells a story of one of the battles through which he passed. He went into the battle with his son. He was a manly, brave young boy,

and the father and mother loved him with all their hearts. The battle opened with terrible fury. The fatalities were very great, and the field was covered with dead and wounded horses and men. After a while they quit firing and took to the point of the bayonet. The governor says he had prayed to God for strength for that particular battle. And he went into it feeling that he had in his own right arm the strength of ten giants. In the midst of a charge he turned around to his troops and shouted "Come on, boys!" and just then he stepped across a dead soldier; he glanced at the face, and lo! it was his son. He saw at the first glance that he was dead, but he did not dare to stop for a minute, the crisis had come in the battle. So with his heart breaking, he just got down on his knees and threw his arms around him and gave him one kiss, and said "Good-by, dear," and sprang up and shouted "Come on, boys!" God give to us a consecration and a spirit of self-denial like that!

There is a farther thought in this scripture incident which we must not overlook, and that is the question of Jesus to those two men who start out to follow him: "What seek ye?" We may have any good thing that we will if we follow Christ. And what we receive will depend upon what we seek. Dr. Maclaren beautifully says

that that question to these two disciples is like a blank check which he puts into their hands to fill up. It is the key of his treasure-house which he offers to us all, with the assurance that if we open it we shall find all that we need. And Paul, who had tested it a great deal, declared that we should find more than we could ask or think. Christ stands before us like some of those fountains which you may find in almost every drug store along the street, which pour out for all who come every variety of drink which they desire. Each man that goes with his empty cup gets it filled with that which he wishes. "What seek ye?" Wisdom? You shall find it. "What seek ye?" Truth? He will give you that. "What seek ye?" The pardon of your sins? "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." "What seek ye?" Love, peace, self-control, victory over besetting sins, hope, an anodyne for your sorrows? You may find them all in Jesus Christ. Paul said to the timid souls in his time, and we may say it with a great deal more assurance after all these centuries, "My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Oh, I wish I could make you know, who are not Christians, how gently and lovingly Christ receives those who come unto him. Don't put off your coming to him as if you dreaded it, as though

it were a hard thing, and only to be done as a last resort. Oh, no! It is the most natural thing in the world that you should come to him, and repent of your sin, and give him all the love of your soul. See how tenderly he deals with these two men. He notices that they are following him, and he kindly inquires, "What seek ye?" It inspires their confidence and they say, "Master, where dwellest thou?" Then, with loving face, he says, "Come and see." Ah, he will be just as kind and merciful as that to you! The hardest thing I ever attempt to do is to try to show men and women who do not know Christ how wonderfully tender and kind he is. An affecting scene occurred once in the streets of Baltimore. Three little girls who were sisters were standing at a shop window full of toys, and the two who could see were trying to describe what they saw to the blind sister who was with them. They were exhausting their feeble powers of description to bring home to the mind of the little blind girl what they saw. But although she listened greedily, they could present only an imperfect representation. The gentleman who saw the circumstance said that it was extremely touching to hear them try to describe the collection of toys in the store, but they could not do it. My dear friend, that is just like trying to tell you about Jesus. You must come and see

him, and behold him with your own eyes, and know his forgiving love in your own heart.

Let me tell you a story which I can vouch for as being absolutely true, illustrating how naturally and easily you may come to the Savior. In the summer of 1857 a student in a New England college, a very bright young man, was to have graduated with honors, but by some deviation from the rules of the school his record was impaired. His father, in his disappointment in his son, rebuked him in a way which angered the young man, and he vowed he would live at home no longer, and uttering abusive language he left the house. But his better nature soon reasserted itself, and he came back to the room he had so rudely left, and throwing his arms around his father's neck, said: "Father, I have done a very wicked thing. I am very sorry that I have abused you so. Can you forgive me? I shall never again do such a thing." The father's quick embrace and tender words removed the agony of guilt from his broken heart, and there was never after that an unkind word between them. Several years passed away. The young man had gone to the front as a volunteer, and as colonel of his regiment was wounded at Gettysburg, and on the sixteenth day afterward his father found him. Gangrene had followed the amputation of the

right limb just below the knee, and had nearly reached the fatal death-mark. He was given up to die. There was no hope remaining. Life was nearly gone. The embrace he gave his father was feeble. His voice was that of one about to give up life. "Dear father, how glad I am to see you once more, but you must do the talking now. I am almost gone."

Returning from a short walk with the surgeon, the father was asked by the colonel,—

"Have you been talking with the surgeon?"

"Yes."

"What did he say about me?"

"He says you must die."

"How long does he think I can live?"

"Not more than four days, and you may go at any moment."

"Father, you must not let me die now. I am afraid to die. I am not prepared to die. If I must, do tell me how. I know you can, for I have heard you do it for others."

The father's heart was breaking, but this was no time or place for tears. There was work to be done, and done at once. There was no hesitation. Instantly the Holy Spirit said to the father, "Tell him of the school incident. That is what he wants; I have held it in reserve for this moment."

"My son, you feel guilty, do you not?"

"Yes. That makes me afraid to die."

"You want to be forgiven, don't you?"

"Yes. Can I be?"

"Certainly."

"Can I know it before I die?"

"Certainly."

"Do make this so plain that I can get hold of it," and he raised his feeble arm and closed his hand as if to grasp it.

"Do you remember the school incident years ago?"

"Yes, very distinctly. I was thinking it all over a few days ago, as I thought of your coming."

"Do you remember how you came back into the house and, throwing your arms around my neck, asked me to forgive you?"

"Yes."

"What did I say to you?"

"You said, 'I forgive you with all my heart,' and kissed me."

"Did you believe me?"

"Certainly. I never doubted your word."

"Did that take away your sense of guilt?"

"Yes."

"All of it?"

"Yes."

"Were you happy at home after that?"

"Yes. It seemed to me more than ever before."

"This is just the thing for you to do now. Tell Jesus you are sorry you have abused him and ask him to forgive you just as simply and sincerely as you did me. He says he will forgive, and you must take his word for it, just as you did mine."

"Why, father, is that the way to become a Christian?"

"I don't know of any other."

"That is very simple and plain. I can get hold of that."

Very much exhausted by this effort, the colonel turned his head upon his pillow to rest. The father, having done all he could for his dying son, sank into a chair and gave way to a flow of tears, expecting soon to close his son's eyes in death. But that painful suspense did not last long. A change had taken place. A new life had come to that soul. Its first utterance changed the tears to joy.

"Father, you need not cry any more. I don't want you should. I want you should sing. It's all right with me now; I am happy; Jesus has forgiven me; I have told him how sorry I am that I have abused him so. He has forgiven me; I know he has, for he says he will, and I have taken his word for it just as I did yours. I am not afraid to die now; but I don't think I shall; I feel the stirring of a new life within me, and

with it comes a feeling of new life in my blood. I want you to sing that good old hymn we used to sing when I was a boy, at family prayers:

> " 'When I can read my title clear,
> To mansions in the skies,
> I'll bid farewell to every fear,
> And wipe my weeping eyes.' "

Immediately the life-current which was rapidly ebbing away began to flow back; the pulse beating at the death-rate began to lessen, the eyes to brighten, the countenance to glow with new blood, the voice to sound more natural, the sadness to give place to cheerfulness and hope. The surgeon coming in, as was his custom every day, to watch the rapid progress of the dreaded gangrene, put his fingers upon the pulse, and said with great surprise: "Colonel, your pulse is wonderfully changed; you look better. What has happened?"

"Well," replied the colonel, "father has shown me how to be a Christian, and I have done it. I am better; I am going to get well."

And, sure enough, the new life in his heart somehow or other put new strength into his body, and he still lives a useful and noble Christian life.

I bring you his Savior to-night.

V

ANDREW BRINGING HIS BROTHER SIMON TO CHRIST.

"One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus."—*John* i. 40–42.

THERE were two brothers prominent in the opening of the Old Testament, and here are two brothers again at the beginning of the New. But how widely different their treatment of each other! In the first case Cain murders his brother Abel, and becomes an outcast and a vagabond on the face of the earth, and in the second case Andrew, having found the Lord Jesus, and being convinced that he was the Lord, instead of trying to keep him to himself, and retain whatever advantage there might be from the acquaintance to his own good, immediately seeks out his brother Simon, and joyfully says, "We have found the Christ; come, brother, and share his love with me."

It is the glory of our Christianity that it is not like other wealth or blessing that is retained by

being hoarded up, or where the enriching of one causes others to be impoverished. There is only so much gold in the world, and if one has a large portion of it, many others can have none, or very little. But it is not so with the treasures of love, or forgiveness, of peace and hope and joy. A man may share these with his brother, and have his own store multiplied in so doing.

It is another glory of our Christianity, that immediately on becoming acquainted with the Lord Jesus we are filled with a burning desire to bring others into the same blessed association. This is a characteristic of great joy. But there is no joy known to human hearts so glorious, so imperative, breaking down all strongholds and through all restraints, like the joy of a heart in its first gladness in finding the Lord and knowing the forgiveness of sins. As Morley Punshon, the famous English preacher, said, there was joy in the breast of the sage of Syracuse when he shouted aloud his glad "Eureka" in the hearing of the people who deemed him mad; there was joy in the soul of Sir Isaac Newton when the first conception of the law of gravitation burst upon his thought as he sat under his orchard tree; there was joy in the heart of Columbus in that moment of triumph over doubt and mutiny, when the tiny land-birds settled upon the sails of his vessel, bearing upon their timid

wings the welcomes of the new world; there is joy for the gold-finder, when he sees the precious ore shining in his gold-pan; joy for children when new marvels of the world open on their vision; joy for the poet when he sends a glad thought through the world that stirs the pulse of mankind; but none of these can compare with the joy of the ransomed sinner who can clasp his brother's hand and say, "Come, brother, we have found the Lord." Oh, if you have never known that joy, then the richest mine of human happiness is as yet unexplored by your spade, and I bid you come and find it to-night.

What a glorious source of joy it must have been to Andrew in after years, when Simon Peter had become one of the most brilliant and successful of all the ministers of Jesus in that age, to recall that it was his hand and word that had led Simon to Christ. How different his feeling from that of the man whom Mr. Spurgeon tells about, who was a Christian, but his only brother was not. He went to visit him on his death-bed, and the dying man said to him, "I am dying. I know that I am lost, but I cannot help putting some of my ruin at your door. I believe you to be a Christian, but I do not recollect that you ever solemnly addressed me about my soul. You believed I was perishing, and yet you did not speak to me; there-

fore, as I cannot conceive you to be inhuman—for you were always a kind brother—I suspect you do not believe as you say you do." His brother said, "I was afraid of offending you. I did speak to you once or twice." The brother replied, "You ought to have taken me by the shoulders. You ought not to have let me be lost. I cannot acquit you." What a heritage of sorrow that brother had laid up for himself! O my friends, are you going to put any such thorns into your pillow?

Every day your influence is telling, either to make men more worldly and indifferent, or to draw them away from their worldliness to the Lord Jesus. Do you remember the story of the call of Elisha? He was the son of a rich farmer in the valley of the Jordan. No doubt the prophet Elijah had spent many a night there in his home, and was well acquainted with this promising young farmer. And as he saw him maturing into a man, his keen eye detected the possibility of something better than mere earthly devotion in his rich, generous nature. And so one day Elijah came along through the field where Elisha was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen. The prophet had just been on Mount Horeb, where he had his wonderful vision. His heart was all aglow with the supremacy of the spiritual life. And as he came by where Elisha was, he merely threw his

mantle around him and passed on. This was a symbolic act which Elisha well understood. It was a call to him from heaven. A prophet's mantle was the badge of the spiritual power that encompassed him. And to clothe another in it was to call him to share the same labor and glory. Elisha had to decide in a moment. Elijah was passing on out of sight. And he did decide. He ran after the prophet as he was going swiftly away. He had only one petition. He wanted to say good-by to his father and mother. Elijah gave him permission, but said to him, "Go, return; for how great a thing have I done unto thee." Elisha went back, drove his oxen home, had them all killed for a farewell feast to his friends, tenderly said good-by to his father and mother, and entered upon his new career that was to be so noble and glorious. O brothers, are you calling by your fidelity and your faithfulness any Elisha who shall continue to witness for Christ when you are gone? Every day as we pass through the fields of life we are exercising an influence over those about us.

"We scatter seeds with careless hand,
And dream we ne'er shall see them more;
But for a thousand years
Their fruit appears,
In weeds that mar the land
Or healthful store.

"The deeds we do, the words we say,
Into still air they seem to fleet,
We count them ever past;
But they shall last,—
In the dread judgment they
And we shall meet!"

Let us not betray the Lord Jesus by a guilty silence. Remember that our brethren are not only our near relatives by blood. They are the children of God for whom Christ died, wherever they may be. How are you influencing your brothers and sisters whom you meet in business and social relations? Will it be possible for any of them to say in the great day of judgment, "I worked with you in the same store. We stood at the counter or at the desk together. We talked about the news, about the weather, about politics, about social matters, about books and papers, sometimes we even talked about churches and religion, but you never told me that you loved the Lord Jesus Christ, and that he was the great Savior from sin, that he had given you peace and a hope of heaven. You never confessed to me that you were a Christian"? O my sister, shall any one come up in that day and say: "I lived in your home. I was employed by you. You paid me my wages regularly. You were kind and good to me. I knew you were a good woman. But you never once even whispered

a word in my ear to let me know that you had a divine life from heaven abiding in your heart, and that it was the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in you that made you good. And I am lost because you never told me"? Oh, that we had the spirit of Isaiah, the young, enthusiastic, glorious Isaiah, whose young heart was burning with love for God and love for his fellow-men, when he exclaimed: "Here am I; send me." Oh, you do not dream how much God can make out of you; how he could give peace to human hearts, and how many lost souls could be won if he only had your supreme and complete consecration to himself!

"Young lips may teach the wise, Christ said;
Weak feet sad wanderers home have led;
Small hands have cheer'd the sick one's bed
With freshest flowers.
Oh, teach me, Father! heed their sighs
While many a soul in darkness lies,
And waits thy message; make me wise!
Lord, here am I!

"And make me strong; that staff and stay,
And guide and guardian of the way,
To thee-ward I may bear, each day,
Some fainting soul.
Speak, for I hear; make pure in heart,
Thy face to see; thy truth impart,
In hut and hall, in church and mart!
Lord, here am I!

"I ask no heaven till earth be thine,
Nor glory crown while work of mine
Remaineth here. When earth shall shine
Among the stars,
Her sins wiped out, her captives free,
Her voice a music unto thee,
For crown new work give thou to me!
Lord, here am I!"

How rapidly we would win the world to Jesus Christ if every Christian followed Andrew's example. There are millions of Christians in the world, but Dr. Schauffler shows that if there were only one hundred, and each one should win one to Christ the first year, and they and their converts should keep on winning only one each year, the whole world would be won to Christ in twenty-five years. Of course any one can easily prove this for himself. The first year there would be 100; second year, 200; third year, 400; fourth year, 800; fifth year, 1,600; sixth year, 3,200; seventh year, 6,400; eighth year, 12,800; ninth year, 25,600; tenth year, 51,200. Perhaps somebody says, "Well, that is rather slow progress in converting the world, only 51,200 in ten whole years." But suppose we go on ten years more and see how it looks. The eleventh year it will be 102,400; twelfth year, 204,800; thirteenth year, 409,600; fourteenth year, 817,200; fifteenth year, 1,634,400;

sixteenth year, 3,268,800; seventeenth year, 6,537,600; eighteenth year, 13,075,200; nineteenth year, 26,150,400; twentieth year, over 52,000,000; twenty-first year, more than 104,000,000; twenty-second year, over 209,000,000; twenty-third year, over 418,000,000; twenty-fourth year, over 836,000,000; and in the twenty-fifth year, if there were enough for each Christian to find his convert, there would be 1,600,000,000 converted to Christ, or more than the population of the whole earth. And yet is it not possible for every one of us to win one soul to Christ during the year? The reason why we do not is because we are vague and indefinite in our purpose ourselves. We sail for nowhere and we draw no one after us toward heaven. God forbid that our selfishness or inactivity should prove a stumbling-block in any one's way to the kingdom.

One of the ocean dangers that captains fear almost more than anything else is the danger of coming in contact with a "derelict," as a ship abandoned at sea is called. There are now supposed to be about thirty of such vessels floating about at the will of the currents in the Atlantic waters. They are without pilot, have neither crew nor rudder, are bound nowhere and carry no cargo to any port. There is scarcely any peril of the sea which is so terrible to the mariner. No sounding will reveal their nearness, no temperature of air or wave will

make known their approach, they carry no light to show where they are in the darkness. Though it carry no guns, a "derelict" is often a more deadly enemy than a man-of-war. Alas! alas! at the number of spiritual "derelicts" there are in religious circles! There can be no doubt that more souls are lost through these drifting lives than through the influence of wicked blasphemers. The ship that steers for no port can only have one influence, and that is to be a stumbling-block in the way to send other ships to the bottom of the ocean. God help us that not one of us may become a spiritual "derelict."

But somebody says to me, "I have gone after my brother Simon and he will not come." Or some mother says, "I have been praying over my boy since he was a little babe in my arms. I have prayed for him all his life and he seems farther away now than ever. He is never out of my mind. The first thing when I awake in the morning I breathe out a prayer to God that it may be the day of his salvation, and often the last thing that I am conscious of as I lie on my pillow, wet with tears about him, at night, I entreat God's love and mercy to seek out my boy. God knows I would gladly die if I might win him to the Lord Jesus Christ!" Do not be discouraged. God hears thy sighs, and counts thy tears, and he will

answer them. Let me tell you the story of a man who was converted not long ago. He was the boss carpenter for a large manufacturing concern. He had many men under him. He had the complete confidence of his employers. He was a man of tremendous physical power. When he was only sixteen years old he could push a plane all day without weariness. And when he was full grown he boasted that he could lift one end of a long stick of timber with more men standing on it than any other carpenter in the county. He was not only a giant in strength, but a man of great energy. He was never quite satisfied with himself unless he had done the work of two days in one, and he infused a good deal of his spirit into the men who worked under him. But he was not a Christian. He rarely if ever saw the inside of a church. He used his Sundays to lay out his business plans for the week.

Finally a series of religious meetings were held in the neighborhood. He was invited to attend, but made no response. He seemed to be entirely indifferent to spiritual things. But the meetings went on. Twice each day he heard the sound of the church bell. That was all. Soon, however, he began to feel an unrest which he could neither throw off nor explain. It disturbed him greatly. He rushed about the town as though the fate of

the world hung on his movements. And he was so obviously nervous, and ill at ease, that people were soon asking each other, "What is the matter with the boss?"

His mother was a Christian. She had lived her religion in the sight of her children from their childhood, and to whatever else the carpenter was indifferent, he never doubted the godly life of his consistent Christian mother. Day after day the weight on the man and his worry grew greater. His thought never once turned to the meetings, but always to his mother. She lived six miles away, and one morning, hardly knowing why, and without saying anything to anybody about it, he started for his old home. He could have reached it in an hour. But in his perplexity and distress he drove one way and another until in the afternoon, having driven twenty miles instead of six, at length the house was reached. He went softly in at the kitchen door, thinking he would surprise his mother. The room was vacant. He listened. Presently, through an open door, came the voice of prayer, and the burden of the petition was, "O God, save my boy, and save him now!"

The strong man dropped into a chair. The great tears rolled down his cheeks. In a minute more the mother was kneeling beside him, and in

another moment her life of prayerful devotion was answered in the conversion of her son.

I never shall forget a scene which I once witnessed under my own ministry. I had in my congregation an old white-haired man who was one of the saints of God. Everybody loved him and believed in him. He had living in the same community a son, a bright young business man who was unconverted. The burden of his soul was constantly upon his father's heart. He did everything he could to win him. But the old man was in such perfect fellowship with Jesus Christ that he did not forget to try to win others in the meantime. And nothing roused his joy so quickly as the knowledge that some one had turned to the Lord. At the close of the sermon one Sunday night I made an appeal to the unconverted to then and there begin a Christian life, and to my great joy the first man on his feet, with tearful face, was the old man's son. After we had had two or three prayers, we had a brief meeting for testimony and thanksgiving. All this time the son had been a number of pews back of his father, who had not known who it was for whom we had been praying; but when the opportunity for testimony was given he was the first one on his feet, and his face glowed and the tears came into his eyes and his lips trembled as he joyfully thanked God for the

young man that had that night started to be a Christian. Then some one near him in a loud whisper said, "Why, Father Taylor, it is Albert." And never in all my life can I forget that sight —the illumination of the old man's face, the glory that shone upon it as he clasped his hands together and exclaimed, "Is it my boy? oh! is it my boy?"

Oh, I wonder if there is anybody here to-night who has been the object of a mother's prayers and a father's tender solicitude. Come back to your father's and mother's God here and now, and find pardon and peace at the Mercy-seat.

VI

JESUS FINDING PHILIP.

"The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me."—*John* i. 43.

JESUS is always seeking after men. Men follow him because he first follows them. It was thus he sought Matthew at the receipt of customs, and so wrought upon him that Matthew left his business and changed the whole course of his life, and the very next thing we hear about him, he is making a public feast for Jesus, so that the whole community may know he has become a Christian. So he sought Zaccheus, another customs officer down in Jericho. He found him up in a tree. He had to make all the advances himself. Zaccheus did not dare invite him to his house for fear of being snubbed. But Jesus invited himself in such a tender way that Zaccheus climbed down joyfully out of the tree and led the way to his house, and after he had opened his heart to the Lord and salvation had come to him and his household, Jesus revealed to him the secret of his great mission: "The Son of man is come to seek and to

save that which was lost." We have seen how he found Andrew in the company with John the Baptist. Later he found Paul on the way to Damascus, when he was known as Saul of Tarsus, and was full of anger and hate, and determined to have vengeance on all Christians. But Jesus sought after him and something of his glory shone around about Saul, and that loving, seeking voice inquired, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." And there was something in that tender voice that broke Saul's heart, and changed the whole purpose of his life, for he "was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." And so he has been calling men all the way along down the centuries. He called John Bunyan when he was a poor drunken tinker, and ignorant and marred as he was by sin before that, he followed Christ so close that he was able to make it possible for him to write that wonderful book, "Pilgrim's Progress," that has filled the whole world full of fragrance and glory, and will make heaven ring with his name throughout eternity. He called Martin Luther when he was a poor, unknown monk, and when he followed him in faithfulness, made him the evangel of the great Reformation, the tides of which are still sweeping in blessing over the earth. He called Dwight L. Moody, sought after him when he was

a dry-goods clerk in Boston, and he followed him so closely that he has probably led more souls to Christ in the last generation than any other man on the earth. Oh, the wonderful seeking Savior! How many of us here to-night remember when he sought us and found us and called us to be his disciples. How well I remember when he called me! It all stands out in my mind to-night. If I had a skilful hand to sketch, I could draw you a perfect picture of the chapel at the college at the watch-night service, close to the midnight, when Jesus said, as he never had said before and with a tenderness that melted my heart, "Follow me."

The saddest part about all this vein of thought is that he seeks out so many, and finds them, and they throw away the call. Think of it, Judas had a call as sure and as genuine as Andrew or Peter or Philip, and he sold it for thirty pieces of silver. Are there any here to-night that have sold their call for the paltry treasures of the world, for the evanescent pleasures of an evening, for the vile indulgences of a sinful appetite? Alas, I have known men who bartered their call from heaven and their prospect for everlasting life for a glass of beer or a bottle of whisky. And I have known others, who would scorn the rude indulgences of passion or lust, to barter just as surely their soul's hope for the idle, silly frivolities of social life.

There is a great lesson in this seeking out of Philip by the Lord Jesus, and in the way he is constantly seeking out people, for all of us who are trying to do that which will be pleasing to him. The whole life and mission of the Son of God, who is also the Son of man, teaches us from every page that the only way to do any great thing for humanity is to give ourselves. Each one of us is given a personality so individual, so unique in quality and temperament and gift, that no matter how much wealth you might have, or influence or power in other ways, the greatest possible thing you can do for the world is to give up to the leadership of Christ your inmost self. We all recognize the value of this personal quality in everything that we see or hear. We like a painting if it seems to bring to us some inner soul message which is a conception of the man who painted it. The artist is an artist because God has given him the power to see in nature, or to see in the face of a man or woman, what ordinary people do not see. It is his gift, it is the badge of his genius, it is his credential, and it is that which gives to the great pictures their fascination and their undying value. It is the same in music. You hear some people sing, the technique of whose performance is perfect. They know all that the schools can give them. They have superiority of

voice and an artistic polish, so to speak, of tone, but there is something lacking. They have not given us themselves. When they sing they give us only the tone and skill and art, they do not give us themselves. They do not give us their hearts, their souls, their personalities. And because of that they cannot, and do not, move us in the profound depths of our being. It is the same thing in public speech. The supreme power of the orator is not in graceful sentences, but in that supreme abandon of himself by which his personality aflame comes in contact with others ready to be kindled, and they warm their hearts at his fire. How tenderly all this is illustrated in the sympathy and comfort which we sometimes try to give each other. It is nothing at all without the self, in times of great grief and agony. A thousand eloquent phrases do not mean as much as one sob or one tear or one grip of the hand or one lightning flash of the eye that brings to the sorrowing heart the conviction that you have given yourself.

Jesus Christ gave himself to the world, gave himself for the lost, gave himself for us. It is the most stupendous sacrifice in all history, because it is the glory and riches of God emptied to share earth's sorrow and temptation. And he was able to save the lost because he had given all his strength and wisdom and sympathy and love,

a consecration to the one great purpose. O brothers and sisters, shall we not learn the great lesson? We can win souls when we are willing to give ourselves; when we are willing to give, not little fragments here and there, not a little bit of money now and then, not only now and then an evening to holy meditation which may have more selfishness in it than anything else, but when we give our very selves with all that we are, and all that we have, to seeking after the lost, expecting to find our joy, our peace, our luxury in thus sharing the cross of Jesus Christ. Then, and not till then, will we have that supreme power which Christ had of awakening in a lost soul a divine homesickness for goodness and heaven.

It was the supreme triumph of Philip's life that when Jesus found him, whatever he was doing, whatever plans he may have had in hand, he changed them all immediately, and turned about and followed the Lord Jesus, and promptly entered upon his service. God grant it may be so with many here to-night! Dr. Jesse Bowman Young, of St. Louis, found a most helpful editorial sermon the other day in some of the signs posted along the route of an electric car line. At one point the message was, "Run slow"; and again at another place, "Opposite this post all east-bound cars must come to a full stop!" Any one

seeing the sign could easily understand that there was danger ahead, and that just at that point the safety of the car and its passengers demanded a full stop. And as he studied these signs he thought they were much like those that are often posted up by God's providence along the way of our human lives. I doubt not there are some who hear me to-night who are facing temptation to grievous sin. Wicked appetites are inflamed. Unholy passions are aroused. Or covetous desires, it may be, are awakened. And before you the devil paints a mirage of seeming ease and indolence, or of sensual gratification, or of greedy ambition or sinful folly. And as you are standing thus before your temptation you come to hear God's word, and as I speak it to you to-night the din of the world's noise seems a little farther away, and the Holy Spirit is arousing your conscience, and your conscience is saying to you: "Come to a full stop! See how full of peril, of folly, of ruin, is the path you have been tempted to follow. Take not another step in the way of sin. Stop just here!"

Or it may be that long ago you were led into a sin; sometimes you have gone recklessly on in it and have drowned every voice of rebuke, and almost imagined that your sin had been forgotten because your conscience disturbed you so little,

and then again your better nature has revolted and you have struggled a little. Ah, it may be you have struggled a good deal. Possibly like the man in the gospel who turned out the evil spirit and even swept and garnished his soul, you may have for a little time cast out your besetting sin. But you failed to follow Christ, and so in an unguarded moment it came back again, reenforced, and more terrible than ever; and to-night you are in the grip of your old enemy. Oh, I pray God that while I speak to you the Holy Spirit may write in letters of living fire before your gaze, "Come to a full stop! Cease to do evil, begin to do well!"

How wise it is to obey these injunctions now, while health and strength and opportunity are given us, for there is certain to come a time, we know not when, but it is doubtless very near to some of us who are here to-night, when all our earthly plans will be broken up and when the end of this life will come for us. It may come suddenly like a flash out of the sky. You may have a week or a month over which you shall look and see breaking right across your path an open grave, and above it the notice which you cannot ignore, however you may have ignored the signs of mercy and warning, a notice which you cannot disobey; it will read, "Here you must come to a full stop!"

Dear brothers and sisters, the reason I am so anxious and so earnest that you should hear these first warnings that would stop you in your way of sin, and check your course in yielding to temptation, and turn you about to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, is that when this last summons shall come you shall be able to read it with peace. I went to see a man the other day who was sick unto death. The friends told me before I saw him that the doctor gave no hope. I went in and sat by his side, and I asked him if the Lord was with him in his sickness and gave him peace, and with a glad smile he said: "Oh, yes, all the time. I suppose I shall only last a few days at the longest, but it is all right; I have been getting ready for this for fifty years, and it is all right now." God grant that you may so live, may so hear the voice of Jesus calling you to follow him, and may follow him so closely that in that hour of hours he shall come to receive you in peace.

Let no poor, discouraged man or woman here to-night doubt for a single moment that Jesus is seeking for you just as definitely and as personally and with as much love as when he sought and found Philip. During the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Mr. Moody preached one Sunday morning to many thousands of people in a great tent from the text, "The Son of man is come to

seek and to save that which was lost." After he had finished, a little boy with handsome face and form was brought to the platform by an officer, who said he had found him wandering in the crowd, evidently lost. Mr. Moody took the little fellow in his arms, and, standing before the great throng, asked the people to look at the lost child.

"This boy has a father who is no doubt at this moment looking for him with anxious heart," said the preacher. "The father is more anxious to find his boy than his boy is to be found. It is just so with our Heavenly Father. He is seeking us to-day: seeking us with unspeakable solicitude. For long years he has been following you, O sinner! He is following you still. He is calling to you to-day."

At this instant a man with blanched face and excited eye was seen elbowing his way toward the platform. As he drew near the little boy saw him, and, running quickly over the platform, threw himself with a bound into his father's outstretched arms. The multitude witnessed the scene with breathless attention, and then broke out into a mighty cheer, while nearly every face in the audience was wet with tears.

"Thus," cried Mr. Moody, "will God receive you if you will only run to him to-day. 'The Son

of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.'"

The same seeking Savior is here to-night, seeking for you. Do not turn away from him. Do not harden your heart against him. But rise up at once and follow him out of your doubt, and your sin, and your hopeless struggle, into peace and joy and everlasting life.

VII

PHILIP FINDING NATHANAEL.

"Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see." —*John* i. 45, 46.

ONE by one through several days we have been studying these special calls coming to individuals through different sources. First there was the call of John the Baptist—at first when preaching to the great congregation, but afterward in what seemed to be a far more effective way, when he had two men alone together and pointing them toward Christ said, "Behold the Lamb of God," which immediately resulted in their following Jesus and becoming his disciples. One of these, Andrew, at once bethought himself of his brother Simon, and going after him, was able to bring him also to Christ. Then we have found Jesus going himself in search of Philip; coming to him with his kindly but clear-cut invitation, "Follow me," which was at once heeded. To-

night we see Philip, who has so recently come to know the Lord himself, going in search of his friend Nathanael. Perhaps in his first joy and gladness in becoming acquainted with Christ as the Messiah and coming to believe in him surely as the one to whom all that blazing path of light throughout the prophecies pointed, he thought within himself, Who among the circle of my friends and acquaintances would best enjoy knowing the Lord? And at once he thought of Nathanael, an earnest, sincere man, a thoughtful man, one who would be greatly interested in anything that was good, and one who had specially studied the prophecies with reference to the Messiah. And so without delay he hurried away to seek Nathanael, and said, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

I think that which impresses us first of all must be the readiness with which Philip apprehends the very essence of what it is to be a Christian. He at once sets himself to doing the work of Jesus Christ. Christ is seeking after men to win them to the truth, and so at once Philip himself becomes a seeker of men. Oh, that we might learn that lesson! We are here in this world as Christ's ambassadors. Every Christian is here in Christ's stead; to stand in his place, to bear witness and

testimony to him. We put ourselves to school to him. Conversion is an entrance into Christ's school. To be a Christian is to be like Christ, to endeavor to do what he would do if he were here in our place. I cannot conceive how it is possible to be a Christian, in any true sense, unless we are striving with humble and honest hearts to do what Jesus would do, if he lived here in our place.

Mr. W. T. Stead, of London, sets this forth very clearly in a remarkable incident which he relates concerning his Christmas in 1885. It was at the time when he was carrying on that memorable fight for social purity in England, which attracted the attention of the whole civilized world and worked with great force for righteousness, though the heroic worker was at that time in jail, suffering imprisonment brought about by the machinations of the titled criminals he had sought to unearth. On that Christmas afternoon Mr. Stead says that he had been writing a letter to a poor girl who had been struggling, against great temptation, to regain a better life. Although it was a better life, it was for the time being much duller, and the poor girl was sorely tempted to go back to the old license. Some of Mr. Stead's friends, who knew her, suggested that he might help her failing resolution if he wrote to her from the jail. He had begun the letter and was trying

his best to say what he thought would help her, when there came to him as it were a voice, which said with great emphasis, "Why are you asking that girl to be a Christian? Never say to any one any more 'Be a Christian;' always say 'Be a Christ.'"

He meditated somewhat, wondering and marveling not a little at the apparent blasphemy of the exhortation; but again the impression came to his mind with all the clearness of a speaking voice: "Do not be a Christian ever any more, for a Christian has come to be a mere label, but say to every one, 'Be a Christ.'"

It was a new thought to him, and his first impression about it was distinctly unfavorable. It seemed to him blasphemous, or if not blasphemous at least exceedingly presumptuous, and he recoiled from using the formula which had been given to him in such a striking manner. But as he thought of it, the truth of it gradually dawned upon his mind, and he accepted it. He finished his letter in harmony with his new thought. Then he sat down and wrote letters to Cardinal Manning, Canon Liddon, General Booth of the Salvation Army, Benjamin Waugh, Hugh Price Hughes, and many other distinguished Christian men, representing every branch of Christian faith, saying to them all what strange words had sounded

in his ear that Christmas day, and asking them what they thought of it. From one and all he received the most encouraging response. Instead of being offended, they all united in declaring that it was the very essence of the gospel message. And yet I fear that many of us have not so learned Christ. How many things we have done which we would not have done if at the time we had stopped to say, "I am here to represent Jesus Christ. I am not to follow my own inclinations, but I am to find out what Jesus would do in this case, and by his help that must I do." It seems to me Philip was simply following out that thought. Christ had found him and brought to him the great joy of salvation, and now he goes and finds Nathanael and brings him to share in the joy of the Master's love. Brothers and sisters, be a Christ, do the Master's work, share the Master's cross, and thus you shall here on earth share his joy, which no man or no circumstance can take away from you, and after a while you shall share his glory forever.

The other thought which I wish to impress this evening is this: Personal contact with Jesus is able to break down all prejudice. Nathanael was prejudiced against Nazareth, and so, incredulously, he asks of Philip, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip's answer is a model

for us every one. He did not undertake to argue with him at all. He did not even enter into a discussion of the prophecies to show that they were all fulfilled in Christ. He simply said to his friend, "Come and see." One hour's personal contact with Christ is worth ten years' studying into evidences of Christianity. It is like arguing with a man who has been hidden away in a cave and never known the light or heat of the great king of day, that there is such a thing as the sun. Bring the poor blanched-faced skeptic out into the sunshine, let it not only dazzle his eyes but warm him through and through, until the blood comes to his cheeks and leaps in his veins, and he will not need argument. Brother, bring your friend to Jesus Christ. Personal contact with him will break down all barriers. There is no ignorance so dense, there is no sin so dark or stubborn, but personal contact with Jesus can dispel it.

Any one here to-night who has never known Jesus Christ as a personal friend and Savior, I invite you now: Come and see. No matter how discouraged you are, or how skeptical you have been, or how completely your sins have mastered you, if you really come to Jesus in obedience and humility and repentance, he is able to save you from them all.

Mr. A. W. Hawkes tells a very interesting story

of a picture which hung on the wall of a hospital ward. It was not a fine work of art; any severe critic would have pronounced it a daub. It did not cost much money, and the frame was of plain, uncarved wood. But the picture told a story, and told it well.

The background of the picture was a rough stone wall, above it a leaden sky; in the foreground a pale, sad-eyed, weary-looking girl had fallen on a stone bench, and in her arms she held a sick boy, with a white band tied around his forehead just above the sunken, faded eyes. And just in front of them the Christ stood, the patient, long-suffering, ever-loving Christ, and his hands, not yet pierced, rested upon the head of the sick boy, and his eyes, full of unspeakable tenderness, caught the upturned eyes of the boy, and in the faded eyes of the poor, sick little fellow the light was beginning to come back.

The picture hung in the hospital on the bare, whitewashed walls. And on the bed directly opposite the picture, tossing in fever, wild with delirium, was a homeless boy from the slums. Born of rum-cursed parents, nursed at a rum-scented breast, and tossed in the nervous arms of a drunken mother, the boy had been born to a heritage of woe. He knew nothing of what the word father meant. He knew "the old man" well

enough to keep out of his way when he could, for he carried marks of his brutal beatings on his face. When the fever came on, he had been found by a policeman, alone in the straw on the damp floor of his cellar.

They brought him to the hospital, and hands soft and delicate ministered to him, while the white-souled nurse trembled in terror at his fearful oaths. Finally he grew better, and the doctor said he would pull through.

One morning when the nurse came, and, pulling up the blind, let the light fall upon his face, she said:

"Shall I read to you?"

"No," said the boy, and his eyes sought the picture. "No, tell me about that picture; who is he?"

"He is the Christ," she said, and then with a prayer in her heart she told the story of his life to the boy, and as she closed she said, "Do you believe in Him?"

"I believe in you," said the boy, and the next morning he said to the nurse, "Tell me more about Him."

The nurse was very glad to tell about Christ. Her life had been one of trial, but now she was anchored in the haven of rest and the Savior's voice had brought a calm to the troubled waters of her life.

As she told the old, old story, the boy said:

"You know Him, don't you?"

"Yes," she said, "thank God, I do."

"And does He love boys?"

"He loves everybody."

"Rough boys like me?"

"Everybody."

And so it went on, day by day. She talked of Him, and at last there came a time when she said again:

"Do you believe in Him?"

And the boy said, "I believe."

And two faces bathed in tears of rapturous joy were lifted up to the picture.

And so the boy who came into that hospital with a moral disease more deadly and terrible than the fever which was consuming his wasted frame, went away renewed not only in body but in soul. Next his heart he carried a small Bible. In his heart he carried the Christ.

That is what the Christ can do. He can do it for you as well as for anybody else in the world. I come to you with the simple message that Philip brought to Nathanael—"Come and see."

VIII

NATHANAEL UNDER THE FIG TREE.

"Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and saith unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."—*John* i. 47–51.

THIS is a chapter of "Beholds." Twice in it, once in the great congregation and once in conversation with his two friends, John the Baptist cried "Behold the Lamb of God!" and here in this paragraph we hear Jesus crying out on the appearance of Nathanael, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" It is very interesting to note that perhaps at no time in his life did Jesus speak so warmly of any man, in praise, if we except the one occasion when John's disciples came to him

from prison, as he did of Nathanael. But he had known John a long time, and John was peculiarly the messenger to make ready for the coming of the Lord. This is the first time he had met Nathanael. He had not yet been introduced to him or exchanged words with him. Yet he is so full of appreciation of the good qualities which he perceives in him, that he exclaims in this glad, happy sentence to those who are standing about him.

I think it is surely worth while for us to notice how readily the Lord Jesus perceived what was good in people, for this was an illustration of one of the divine characteristics of his nature. He was always detecting veins of goodness in people that made them worth saving. The people of Jericho saw nothing but sin and meanness in Zaccheus. But underneath all the cheating and miserliness, Christ detected at once the slumbering manhood that was there. Other people saw in the Magdalen or in the woman at Samaria only sinful, outcast creatures. But Jesus saw there the golden vein of womanhood that could be dug out and redeemed. And so you may go through the life of Jesus, and one of the characteristics of the Savior that will comfort you most is that he is always looking for the good. As surely as a magnet detects the steel and draws it toward itself,

Christ finds the good in a man or woman, and brings it to the surface. Oh, what a glorious thing it is to be always doing that! Depend upon it, the opposite spirit, that is forever causing us to seek out, as if by intuition, the evil spots in our friend or neighbor, is born of some kindred rotten spot of sin in our own hearts.

There is an old fable of a man, who for some crime or injustice was cursed with the power of seeing other human beings, not in their beauty of flesh and blood, but as skeletons, gaunt and grisly. Much of the sorrow of the world comes from the fact that too many of us have this miserable faculty, and go about stripping off every worthy charm and beauty with which men and women are clothed, trying to find and expose some ugly trait or passion underneath.

The story is told of two colored boys, between whom there was a feud, that they met one day in the street and began to quarrel. One of them became very abusive, and called the other a great many hard names. The other listened to him until his stock of vituperation was exhausted, and then said: "Is you done?" The first intimated that he had no more to say. The other replied: "All dem things you say I is, you's dem." The boy perhaps did not understand the philosophy of his words, but, consciously or unconsciously, he was

uncovering a great moral law. No man will use words of hatred and revenge who has not the rotten spot of hatred or revenge in his own heart. No man's eye will be alert and suspicious to detect evil in his fellows and gloat over it in his meditation, unless there is the kindred spot of evil in his own soul which forms the dark lens through which he looks at others. The miserable gossip, and incipient slander, that often cause so much sorrow, and embitter so many homes, and not infrequently make the innocent and pure to suffer needless wrong, are born first of all in some restless and suspicious heart, that is restless and suspicious because it is itself consciously impure. When you are tempted to say hard things and bitter things about your fellow-men, remember the little colored boy's reply, "All dem things you say I is, you's dem." And let us remember that he who knew what was in man, who knew our humanity better than anybody else in the world, thought better of it than anybody else, and counted it worth giving his own life to ransom it. Your hope and mine rests in the fact that Jesus Christ, who knows us better than any one in the world, sees in us that which is worth saving. Let us take him at his word. If we are disheartened and discouraged about our own selves, let us consider and be encouraged by the thought that the

Savior knows us better even than we know ourselves, and knows the latent possibilities for good in us which nobody else has ever discerned.

To a Jewish ear this was a peculiarly gratifying thing which Jesus said about Nathanael: "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." It carried an earnest Jew away back in their history to Jacob, as he was coming up fleeing away from Laban, and through God's mercy and grace was able to part in peace with his father-in-law, only to run seemingly into the jaws of death at the hands of his wronged and angry brother. It was at Jabbok ford, where, having made all the provision that his wisdom could conceive, he went out alone into the darkness to spend the night in prayer to God. We have sketched briefly in the scripture the story of what transpired that night. How God came in the person of the angel and wrestled with him until the break of day; a pictorial way of telling us of a night of struggle which resulted in the perfect transformation of the character of one of the most interesting men in all the scripture narratives. Jacob's life before this had been selfish and tricky, full of deception and fraud. But in that night at Peniel he came face to face with God, his sins were revealed to him in a new light. His utter helplessness, and the failure of all his methods, and the evanescent character

of those things in which he had trusted, left him with no other hope but God. And so as the morning came, wounded and limping and helpless, he threw his arms about the neck of the mysterious antagonist, and as the angel cried, "Let me go! let me go!" he answered with all the earnestness and purpose of his soul, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." And so at last he prevailed. His heart was all the Lord's, and in that great hour of victory the messenger of God said to him, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed."

After recalling this vivid scene, it is easy to see how great the praise which Jesus bestowed upon Nathanael in the minds of those who were about him, when he said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." It was as if he had said: "Here is a man of prayer; a man who has waited for the consolation of Israel; a man who has studied the prophecies, and the Old Testament scriptures, with loving and earnest heart; a man who has, without guile, but with sincerity of purpose, sought every avenue of light that opened to him; a man, though he was prejudiced against Nazareth, yet when his friend Philip said, 'Come and see,' held his prejudices in abeyance, and came with all his heart seeking the truth. And

he, like Israel of old, has prevailed. Long he has been pleading with God that the Messiah might come. At last his prayer is answered. This is his Peniel, and he shall see God face to face. Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." And how soon the sensitive soul of Nathanael detected the Lord. Scarcely more than a dozen words of conversation had passed before it is Nathanael's time to exclaim with glad and hearty reverence, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel!" O brothers and sisters, shall we not find our Peniel to-night? If there be any here who have been living lives of doubt and uncertainty, sometimes prayerful, and again trusting in ourselves, lives lacking the clear and joyous consciousness of the abiding presence of God with us, let us come to God to-night in earnest supplication. Let us draw near to him with faith. Let us come boldly to the throne of grace as he has invited us, and ask largely that our joys may be full. Let us twine our arms about his neck, and lie upon his breast. From full hearts let our cry go into his ear: "I will not let thee go except thou bless me. In prosperity and adversity, in life and in death, I will not let thee go, my delight, my joy, my glory, my everlasting salvation for time and for eternity! No; for naught will I let thee go; sooner will I let go fame or success or

money or pleasure, or my own life, than thee, without whom life were death to me, and without whom heaven itself would be hell!"

Nathanael in this conversation with Jesus was greatly astonished that the Savior, seeing him standing apart under the fig tree, saw into his heart even then, and knew the secret thoughts of his soul. There is this solemn thought in our contemplation this evening, that Jesus not only perceives the good that is in us and rejoices over it, but he perceives the evil that is there. Every evil purpose we form in our inmost soul is perceived by him. Nothing is hid from his sight. This reminds us of that solemn scripture that says, "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart."

Sir Robert Ball, the great astronomer, said recently in a lecture that the photographic eye has brought out millions of stars of whose very existence we were totally ignorant until the last few years. He also stated as one of the wonders of photography that a friend of his took a kodak view of the steamship "Great Eastern" when it was lying in the harbor at Liverpool. The hull of the ship was perfectly black, having been newly tarred; and yet, when the photographs were printed, the word "Lewis" was to be discerned on the side of the ship. The gentleman who had taken the pho-

tograph went back at once to see if he could detect any such word, for his memory was very distinct that nothing of the kind could be discerned when he took the picture; neither could he discover it on his second investigation. Being greatly astonished, he went to some of the officers of the "Great Eastern," who told him that the word had been inscribed in the place where his photograph indicated it, but they had afterward heavily tarred the ship, and it was entirely obliterated so far as the human eye could discern; but some of those searching rays which the photographic eye had been able to catch had reproduced it.

The distinguished astronomer also told of a photographer who had stated to him that, after a sitting by a beautiful young lady whom he had long wished to photograph, the artist found that the proof showed her face most strongly mottled; whereupon he repaired to her home to say he wished to try again, when he was informed that she was sick in bed with the measles. He had caught nothing with his eye that marred her beauty, but the keen, searching eye of the camera had caught the germs of the measles under her skin.

Oh, hear the solemn lesson! One may cover up, it may be through all one's life, the hidden secret of sin in one's heart; it may be possible to deceive

our neighbors, to deceive even our dearest friends, as to the wicked and evil desire or purpose of our souls. There may be nothing that their eye can detect to mar the moral beauty of our characters, but to that clear eye to whom the brightest sunshine is but darkness, in his presence who reads our purposes as they are forming in our souls—it is all naked and open as the day to him. Instead of being discouraged and disheartened by this, let us rather be warned and inspired to forsake our sins, and open our hearts to the coming of him who is able to cleanse them and make them pure.

Let us see in this lesson we are studying that Jesus comes into our lives with a message from the very home of the soul. As soon as Nathanael recognized in him the Messiah, he cried out in glad assurance, as though he had found that which he had long been seeking, that which was the end of his seeking and the end of his very being, the one who at once belonged to him and to whom he himself belonged: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel!" My dear friends, I bring Jesus to you to-night, not as some one foreign to your nature, but as the one who above all others deserves your love and your heart's supreme confidence. I bring you a message from home.

The story is told of a young man who went out

from England to Australia as a gold-digger. He made money, and finally established a rude little store at a place called "The Ovens," a noted gold-field about two hundred miles from Melbourne. As soon as he was settled, he wrote home asking his parents to come out to live with him and to bring with them, if possible, an English skylark. The father died on the voyage, but the old mother and the lark arrived safely in Melbourne, and found their way at last to the store at "The Ovens."

The next morning the skylark was hung outside the rough hut, and at once began to sing. Unlike the Jews in Babylon, who hung their harps on the willows and could not sing "the Lord's song in a strange land," this little skylark began to sing his old native songs in the far-off Australia. The effect was wonderful. The sturdy gold-diggers paused in their work to listen; many curses from drunken lips were silenced by the little singer in his cage. Far and near the news of the "real English skylark up at Wilstead's store" spread like lightning among the miners.

When Sunday morning came there was a sight such as had not been seen since the first gold has been discovered in that region. From every quarter, from hills and streams twenty miles away, came a throng of rough, brawny Englishmen,

brushed and washed, to look as decent as possible. There had been no pre-arrangement, as was plain from the half-ashamed expression on every man's face as he saw his acquaintances. They had all come on the same errand—to hear the lark.

They were not disappointed, for the little minister plumed his crest, and, lifting up his voice, sang them a sermon from his cage which touched the heart of every man in his congregation. As those brawny, and in many cases rough and wicked, men listened to the little singer, they were carried back again to their old English homes; father, mother, brothers and sisters, the old church where they used to worship, all the tender and hallowed associations of childhood and youth, came back to their hearts, and ministered to them that day. Thus they were made tender and thoughtful and reverent and brought closer to God.

Dear brothers and sisters, I bring you a message from home to-night. Some of you have wandered far away. Farther than Australia is from England, you have wandered in your thoughts and purposes, in your desires and in your deeds, in your affections, from the heart of your Heavenly Father. But to-night I bring you a message from home. Your Heavenly Father still loves you, loves you so much that he gave the Lord Jesus Christ to suffer and die on the cross to redeem

you. Come, as Nathanael did, with reverence into his presence, casting aside your prejudice and everything that would detain you from the Mercy-seat. Come and open your heart to him, and I am sure that in your glad recognition of him as your Savior and your Redeemer, you will cry out with Nathanael, "Thou art the Son of God, thou art King forever over my soul!"

IX

THE BEST OF THE WINE AT THE LAST OF THE FEAST.

"Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now."—*John* ii. 10.

It is significant that Christ's first miracle was wrought in the midst of the quiet scenes of domestic joy, to add happiness to those by whom he was surrounded. It is not a sin to be glad. It is not wrong to be joyous and to be the cause of innocent joy to others. Nay, it is a duty. Christ in this first miracle puts the seal of Christianity's approval, with undoubted emphasis, upon the righteousness of joyous human fellowship. Nobody is more at home or adds more to the delight and gladness of domestic society than the Lord Jesus Christ. How greatly they blunder who shut Christ out of their fireside circle for fear he will throw a chill upon their home joys! No one in all the universe can add such sweetness to the association of the home, can bring to its enjoyments so rich a wine of content, as Jesus.

The subject which we are to study this evening

has been discussed widely through all the Christian centuries. Mr. Spurgeon in a great sermon on this scripture, entitled "Satan's Banquet and Christ's," portrays, with that simple eloquence of which he was so great a master, the house of Satan as having four tables. First there is the table of the profligates—a gay table. The governor comes in. He has a bland smile and a robe of many colors. He brings the wine-cup of pleasure. The young man takes it, and sips at first cautiously. He does not intend to indulge much. But how sweet it is! He drinks a deeper draught, the wine is hot in his veins. How blest is he! He drinks and drinks again, till his brain begins to reel with the sinful delight. This is the first course. Now with a leer the wily governor rises. His victim has had enough of the best wine. He brings in another, all flat and insipid—the cup of satiety. "Who hath woe? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine," figuratively and literally. The profligate soon discovers that all the rounds of pleasure end in satiety. "Give me something fresh," he cries; and gaiety itself grows flat and dull. The governor of the feast commands another liquor to be brought. This time the fiend bears the black goblet of suffering. He who rebels against the laws of God must often reap the harvest in his own body here. "The wages

of sin is death." The last course remains—the grave. The profligate dies, and descends from disease to everlasting condemnation. Perhaps you have not been interested in this table, possibly the next will interest you more. Here it is, all clean and comely. The wine on it seems to have no intoxication in it. How contented are the guests! It is the table of self-righteousness. Satan, like an angel of light, brings forth a golden goblet, containing the wine of self-satisfaction. This wine makes the drinker swell with self-important dignity. He is proud of his own morality. But when the cup is finished, it is replaced by that of discontent and unquietness of mind. As confidence is wanted, it is found wanting. This is removed, and the cup of dismay is brought in. How many a man who has been self-righteous all his life, at the last discovers that the basis of his hope is gone, that like the foolish builder in the gospel he has built his house upon the sand, and when the storm of old age or death comes upon it, it goes to pieces with a crash and is swept to eternal disaster. The next table is crowded with most honorable guests—kings, princes, generals, mayors, aldermen, congressmen, and great merchants. Satan brings in a flowing bowl, and says: "Young man, you are starting in business; get rich as fast as you can." The youth drinks and says: "I have

abundance now: my hopes are indeed realized." But next comes the nauseous cup of care. Riches canker his heart. After this comes the cup of avarice, which increases the burning thirst of which many have died, clutching their money-bags. Then there is the cup of loss, in which money and the satisfaction it once gave perish. And at last, like poor Dives, tormented in the flames, he cries in vain for a drop of water to cool his parched tongue. Then there is a last table set up in a very secluded corner for secret sinners. Satan steps in noiselessly with the cup of secret sin. "Stolen waters are sweet," he whispers in their ears, but he is a liar from the beginning. After that he brings the wine of an unquiet conscience, next a massive bowl filled with a black mixture, called the fear of detection. This is quaffed by unwilling lips. Discovery is the last cup. "Be sure your sin will find you out," if not in this world, in the next.

We gladly turn from this dreadful house, with its ghastly cries of lost souls, to the house of the Savior. Here they all sit at one table in loving brotherhood. The noble, benignant, tender Christ is at the head of the table. Here the order is reversed. That which is hardest comes first—the bitter cup of conviction and repentance. But this is soon replaced by the goblet of forgiving love.

After it comes the cup of bliss, the feast of communion, the flowing bowl of joyous labor in fellowship with Christ, and finally the new wine of the kingdom, drank to the music of glorious song and shouts of everlasting victory in the paradise of God. Brother, sister, choose ye this day which feast you will attend.

We have presented to us in this scripture in very simple illustration the broad contrast there is between the world and Christ. The world gives the best wine first. It is so in trade. We make proverbs about it, such as "A new broom sweeps clean," "The best on the outside," or "He puts the best foot forward." It is also proverbial that the best bargains are to be found in the shop windows, the largest apples at the top of the barrel, the best bunches of raisins on the first layer of the box. It is so in society. The best clothes, the best behavior, the best mood, are expected to be worn there. It is so of worldly enjoyments. They never give such intoxicating enjoyment and delight as at first. After a while they end in satiety and pain, suffering and disgust. This is true of the most popular social pleasures that are distinctly worldly. They are best first. They do not get better, but worse, and are often false to every promise made in the beginning, and what seemed to be an angel proves to be a demon that cruelly

and savagely destroys. This is true of all things that are purely earthly. It is only the life that has in its purpose, its plan, its spirit, a kinship to Christ that gets stronger and richer by experience and time. The contrast is on every hand. It speaks from every street, it is the commonplace of human experience.

Sam Jones, the Southern evangelist, speaking out of the sad experience of his own youth, said that when he crossed the line of accountability, the devil took him by the hand and led him up into a large, capacious palace, adorned with all the pictures of earth; and he looked at the elegant furniture and beautiful carpets, and the devil said, "If you will be my servant, I will give you all this." He looked again and he thought, "Sure enough, there is something here I like—a chair of ease, an offer of contentment; here is everything I want." So he entered in and took possession. He walked out and came back, and lo, his chair of ease was gone forever. He returned another day and his sofa of contentment was gone, and he never felt contented afterward. Another day when he came back his table of pleasure had been taken away, and there was no more joy for him. The beautiful pictures followed them. One piece of furniture after another disappeared, until one day the carpets were all taken up and removed.

Even the windows and the doors were taken down, and there were only the bare floors and the bare walls, and all ease and comfort and content and pleasure and protection had disappeared, leaving only desolation, hopelessness, and ruin. "The wages of sin is death."

But, thank God, there is a life of trust and simple confidence that is wholesome and pure, that is not vanity, and that grows sweeter and richer with the years. How blessed it is to enter upon such a life in youth, before the nature is hardened and soiled by sin! Youth is so full of the possibilities of education and enlargement. Its horizon is almost limitless, if the soul is given up to goodness. If a man wants to be a mechanic, or a merchant, or a physician, or a lawyer, or a minister, or a journalist, he begins in youth. It is essential to all high success in the trade or the profession that he shall take advantage of youth's glorious possibilities. How much more so if we want to make of life a tower of strength for goodness, if we want to make strong the foundations of a lighthouse to shine abroad the light of the Lord Jesus Christ. Childhood is immeasurably more impressionable than youth, and in turn youth is far more easily impressed than manhood. As hot wax receives the impression of the stamp and retains it long, so the mind of the young may be stamped by the

character of God and carry it always, a beneficent blessing to all who may read it. The young life is simple. It has not yet come to be complex. How different with the man who has come to middle age or passed it. He is no longer simply a son and a brother, a friend and a student; but he is possibly a husband and a father, with a thousand business cares and responsibilities. His life has branched out and become intricate. But if one comes to the Lord Jesus Christ in his youth and gives his very heart to him, every relation of life that he takes on is dictated and leavened with the gracious influence of the presence of Christ. Such a life will stand the test of time and eternity.

There used to be an old, battered safe standing on Broadway, New York, on which was this sign: "It stood the test, the contents were all saved." It had been in one of the hottest fires New York ever saw, but the old safe had carried its treasure safely through it all, and delivered every scrap of paper it contained unharmed to its owner. So you may put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and know that he will be faithful, and bring you out safe in the end with everything committed to his care. No life is so safe as that which is guided and controlled by the Lord Jesus Christ.

A very interesting story is told of Professor Henry Drummond—a story which I doubt not has

just the lesson that some one needs here to-night. He was staying with a lady whose coachman had signed the pledge, but afterward gave way to drink again. This lady said to the professor, "Now this man will drive you to the station; say a word to him if you can. He is a good sort of fellow, and really wants to reform; but he is weak."

While they were driving to the station the professor tried to think how he could introduce the subject. Suddenly the horses were frightened and tried to run away. The driver held on to the reins and managed them well. The carriage swayed about, and the professor expected every moment to be upset, but after a little the man got the better of the team, and as he drew them up at the station, streaming with perspiration, he exclaimed: "I say, that was a close shave! Our trap might have been smashed into matchwood, and you wouldn't have given any more addresses."

"Well," said Professor Drummond, "how was it that it did not happen?"

"Why," was the reply, "because I knew how to manage the horses."

"Now," said the professor, "look here, my friend, I will give you a bit of advice. Here's my train coming. I hear you have been signing the pledge and breaking out again. Now I want to give you a bit of advice. Throw the reins of

your life to Jesus Christ." And he jumped down and got into the train.

The driver said afterward that it came upon him like a flash of lightning. He saw where he had made a mistake, and from that day he ceased to try to manipulate his own life, but gave the reins to Jesus Christ. Brother, can't you do that very thing to-night?

Remember, that no good thing can come to you until sin is abolished from your heart. So long as you go on making compromises with evil, there is no hope. Sin is an invader in your heart, it will bring you disaster all the time, and it must be smitten to the death if you are ever to have a noble and pure and happy soul.

It is said that the emperor of Annam has a large pool of water in the court in his palace in which he keeps his reserve treasure, to be touched only in case of absolute necessity. The money not intended for use is placed in the hollowed-out trunks of trees, which are thrown into the water. To keep away thieves and to prevent the emperor himself from being tempted to draw upon this reserve fund without sufficient cause, a number of crocodiles are kept in the water, their presence and the certainty of being eaten alive serving to insure the security of the royal treasure in a most effectual manner. When it becomes indispensable to

draw upon this novel style of bank, the crocodiles have to be killed, but this can be done only with the emperor's permission, and after the matter has been duly approved by the minister of finance. So, my friend, the crocodiles of your selfishness and wicked habits and unholy desires must be smitten to the death if you are to enjoy the riches of a pure soul.

I present before you to-night this better life—a life that gets brighter and more glorious all the way through. We have seen that every path of evil gets worse and ends finally in the outer darkness. But I offer you a path of life that gets brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. Remember the words of the psalmist, speaking about God's people, "Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues." This word rendered "presence" means literally "face." So the psalmist is really saying, "Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy face." How different from the hiding-place of those who trust in evil and Satan and sin. Where are they hiding to-night? In jails and penitentiaries and dungeons, in secret alleys and byways, in remorse and in fear, covering up their secret sins, shuddering for fear their sins will find them out, longing and praying that the darkness may cover

them and hide them. That is the way of sin, it makes us long that the darkness may cover up our sin and hide it. But if you come to the feast of the Lord, and sit down with him in heavenly places in Jesus Christ, he will blot out your sins, and he will hide you from the storms of life in that glorious radiance of love that shines forth from his own benevolent face.

There is a wonderful metaphor in the book of Revelation about a woman, "clothed with the sun," and caught up into it from all her enemies to be safe there from every foe. So those who love the Lord Jesus Christ are surrounded by the glow of the Sun of Righteousness, they are clothed upon with light, and God fights their battles for them. The old Greek mythology declared that the radiant arrows of Apollo, shot forth from his far-reaching bow, wounded to death the monsters of the slime, and the unclean reptiles that crawled and reveled in darkness. So the light of God's face slays the repenting sinner's foes of every kind. O my brother, it is the most glorious privilege of my life to tell you that you may enter upon this glorious life here and now.

When Canon Wilberforce was in this country, he was dwelling one day in one of his addresses on the importance of the word "now," and related this incident. A miner having heard the gospel

preached determined that, if the promised blessing of immediate salvation were true, he would not leave the presence of the minister who was declaring it, until he was sure of possessing it himself. He waited after the meeting to speak with the minister, and in his rude speech said: "Didn't ye say I could have the blessing now?" "Yes, my friend." "Then pray with me, for I'm not goin' away wi'out it." And they did pray, these two men, wrestling with God like Jacob at Peniel, until the miner heard the silent words from the still small voice of the Spirit that filled his heart with joy. "I've got it now!" he cried, his face reflecting the joy of his heart; "I've got it now!" The next day a terrible accident occurred at the mine. The minister was called to the scene, and among the dead and dying lay the quivering, almost breathless body of this man, who only the night before, big and brawny, came to him to know if salvation could really be had "now," for the asking. There was but a fleeting moment of recognition between the two ere the old miner's soul took flight, but in that moment he had time to say in response to the minister's sympathy, "Oh, I don't mind, for I've got it—I've got it—it's mine." "To-day is the day of salvation; if ye hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

X

CHRIST'S CONVERSATION WITH NICODEMUS ABOUT CONVERSION.

"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."—*John* iii. 7.

THE natural simplicity of Jesus in conversation is always interesting and delightful. How this little evening talk with Nicodemus has been growing upon the world ever since. Not only have sermons been preached about it, and books written upon it, but multitudes of earnest hearts have found in it their own introduction to Christ and the beginning of a new and peaceful life.

Everything that is told us about Nicodemus is in his favor. He is presented to us in a very amiable light. He seems to have been a serious and honorable man, true to the light of his time. He was a sincere believer in the faith of his fathers. He refused to be led away by the bitter prejudice of the Sanhedrin against Christ, and with Joseph of Arimathea voted for his acquittal when Jesus was on trial before that body. And when finally the great sacrifice was ended on the cruel cross, he came with his loving gifts to

share with Joseph the last tender offices of kindly love for the Savior, giving to him in his death —what he had not been able to bring himself to do in his life—his open and devoted discipleship. I have often thought it must have been a great regret to Nicodemus in after years that he had been so slow in openly espousing the cause of the Savior; yet I do not share with those who think it was an undoubted evidence of his cowardice that he came to talk with Jesus at night. No doubt it was much easier at night to have a quiet conversation with the Savior, to open his heart to him, and to ask those deep and earnest questions which his soul hungered to have answered. Christ always gave welcome to all who came. He talks with Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, with the same simplicity, the same straightforward earnestness, the same heart-searching fidelity, that he did with the poor woman who came to the well of Samaria. Social caste did not exist for Jesus Christ at all. A man was a man for all that, whether he was rich or poor, whether he was high or low, outwardly moral or outbreakingly sinful. He was a man, a son of God, who needed the divine quickening, the heavenly cleansing, who "must be born again."

Many stumble over the expression, "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot

enter into the kingdom of God." There seems to me to be no reason for believing that this has any reference to our present baptism by water or any suggestion of its necessity in order to salvation. Nicodemus had no doubt already been baptized by water with the baptism of John. Undoubtedly so serious and earnest a Pharisee as Nicodemus would have been among the first to turn to the honest and unflinching preaching of John the Baptist. But John came only to make way for Christ, and declared everywhere: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Jesus was simply saying to Nicodemus that his own present standing was insufficient, that to be baptized by John unto repentance was not enough, that he must go on unto the baptism of the Holy Ghost. He must be born again not only to outward works, but to new purpose, new disposition, new hope, new love, in his inmost soul.

These declarations of Christ are exceedingly significant, because of the radical and imperative manner in which they are given. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And still again, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye

must be born again." It would be impossible to make more radical declarations than these. They are all the more impressive when we take into consideration the character of the man to whom they are spoken. He was not a poor fellow who was possessed with demons, like that wild man of Gadara, who had been the terror of his town, had been chained and imprisoned, and had broken through all restraint until he came under the heavenly influence of Christ; neither was he to be compared with the sinful woman who came and sat at the Master's feet in the house of Simon and broke the costly box of ointment on his head, who wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with her own hair—the very presence of whom was a source of disgust and shame to Simon and his friends; but he was a highly dignified, honorable man, a ruler of merit and ability, whose life everywhere was recognized as high and lofty in its principles, a man who was sincerely seeking to find the light. It was to such a man that Jesus made these imperative statements, and to whom he put them most personally, in a declaration as clear as that of Nathan when he stood in the presence of King David, and, after arousing the king's anger and indignation against a horrible piece of iniquity, looked the king straight in the face and said, "Thou art the man." So Jesus said to Nicodemus,

definitely and personally, "Ye must be born again."

We ought to learn from this the great truth that we are all alike under sin. Not that all men have committed the same sins; or that there is not a separation as wide as the east from the west between the grades of cultivation and refinement and character seen in different people; or that all are as great sinners as they may become—but that the deadly poison is in the refined and cultivated sin (if one may so speak of it), as well as in the deed that seems to us most loathsome and horrible. Sin is rebellion against God. It is the refusal to accept the will of God concerning us. It is the neglect of love and gratitude in our hearts to God for his goodness. And it is as necessary that one who has simply neglected to give God love, to give him sincere fidelity and devotion, to give him prayerful tenderness and reverence, should be born again into this new spirit of reverence and love and gratitude and fidelity, as it is for the new birth to come to the most degraded sinner that lurks in the dives of the city. Jesus Christ himself said that some of these outbreaking sinners among the publicans and harlots were not so far away from God in their inmost heart, and were more likely to be brought back by the tender pleading of the Spirit and the sweet message of

his mercy, than were some people who prided themselves upon their morality and their self-righteousness.

There can be no doubt that the New Testament makes it just as clear as language can make it, that every man and woman in the world needs to be born anew into the kingdom of love and fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. To many this comes in childhood. Many wise Christian parents watch the opening of the hearts of their children as florists watch the opening of the beautiful buds in their conservatories, and turn their hearts while they are yet tender, and before they have been marred or soiled by sin, in love and consecration to the Lord Jesus Christ. Many of you heard last night that godly woman who stood here in your presence, while her face beamed with the joy of her heart in its communion with Christ, and told us that she had the clear witness of the Spirit that she was a child of God when she was seven years old. I have known many persons of whose most genuine and glorious conversion at an earlier age than that I have never had a doubt. I would to God that all children were converted at that age. It is the natural thing. Children ought to grow up loving the Lord Jesus Christ just as simply and as naturally as they grow up loving father and mother. Oh, when shall we cease to

bring up these multitudes of Christless children in Christian homes? When shall we learn wisdom enough not to give over the impressionable years of childhood and youth to be sown with the wild oats of worldliness and sin? But if this genuine turning of the soul to the Lord Jesus Christ does not take place then, it must take place later, or there is no promise in God's word of salvation. It is not an arbitrary edict of the Almighty, it is simply that there can be no other way according to the law of our being. "The pure in heart shall see God"—not because they are an elected or selected few, a privileged class, but because in the very nature of things only the pure in heart can see him. So Christ says to Nicodemus that unless a man be born again, born anew of the Divine Spirit, "he cannot see"—not "he shall not"—"he cannot see the kingdom of God."

I read to you this evening the sixteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. There you have the story of the first two conversions which took place on Paul's missionary tour into Europe—that of Lydia, a woman very much of the character of Nicodemus, I should think, and the other the Philippian jailer, a man offering as strong a contrast to the gentle merchant, Lydia, as could easily be imagined. Lydia was a woman of prayer. When Paul first came to her city, he heard of a

prayer-meeting near the outer wall, and he went there, thinking it a good place to begin his work. Lydia was one of the women present. She was a prayerful woman, earnestly seeking to know the right, longing to find the truth, and sensitive to anything that promised to bring her spiritual enlightenment and help. On the other hand there can be no doubt that this Philippian jailer was a brutal kind of a man, a hardened man, like his class; the kind of man who, when misfortune overtook him, was ready to do that most cowardly thing any man ever does—plunge the sword into his own heart, dying the death of a dog, and leaving his wife and children to bear the brunt and carry all the burden alone. And yet they both needed and received the divine call to conversion. Both of them were happily converted to the Lord Jesus Christ. Into each of their hearts came the new birth of love and confidence in Jesus.

True, they came very differently. As the eloquent editor of *Zion's Herald* says, the woman's heart opened to the truth as quietly as a morning-glory opens to the rising sun. The jailer's heart opened as the rock opens when it is torn asunder by the blast of dynamite. It needed only that the sweet message of the gospel be presented to Lydia, and she embraced it at once with all her heart, joyfully. It needed an earthquake that shook

down prison walls and shook off the stocks from the prisoners' limbs to awaken the jailer to repentance. One of them was moved by the sweet influences of love, because the great deeps of her tender heart were touched and her gratitude overflowed to the Christ who had done so much for her; and the other because his conscience was aroused and thundered in his ear, "Thou art a sinner against God, and thy sin has found thee out." But, thank God, it ended the same with both of them. Love and fear have the same purpose in God's economy of grace. Do not hold back because your emotions are stirred, because your heart overflows with feeling, because your eyes are wet with tears. Do not hesitate because you have these feelings, and say, "I ought not be moved by these emotions;" rather thank God that he has thus touched your heart, and yield him back love for love. On the other hand, do not hesitate because your conscience is aroused and, instead of emotion that makes you weep, there is a stern conviction in your reason, in your judgment, that you are under condemnation of the law, that you are a sinner in God's sight. Do not, I beg of you, shrug your shoulders and say, "I will not be driven into religion through fear." O brother, both love and fear are arrows in the quiver of the Savior, and if either of them have found a lodg-

ment in your conscience or heart, I pray God they may not be withdrawn until the Savior's sacrificial blood hath made thee whole.

Do not hesitate because, like Nicodemus, there are things about Christianity which you cannot understand, because the new birth seems mysterious to you. Take rather to your heart those tender words of Jesus, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine."

One of the most interesting as well as influential Christian workers, in recent years, is Lady Henry Somerset, the leader of the temperance hosts of Great Britain. Her conversion was very interesting. She was surrounded by a most ultra rich and fashionable circle. Few, if any, of the titled men and women whom she constantly met in her social life were earnest and devoted Christians. Not only so, but through reading infidel works she had come to doubt the very existence of Christ. Yet she could not rest in such a state of uncertainty. In her better hours her heart hungered and thirsted for something that was real, for something upon which her soul might feed. She pondered and thought and read, and even prayed, but found no resting-place for her faith. Finally, one evening, as she was walking in her grounds, she heard a voice speaking to her inmost soul, "Act as if I were, and

thou shalt know that I am." She repeated the words over and over again. The more she pondered on the message, the wiser it seemed. And from that hour she began to try to do the will of God. Whatever seemed to her to be pleasing to Christ, that she did. Whatever a Christian woman ought to do, that was her law, and so she came into a joyous and inspiring fellowship with Jesus Christ. O my dear friends, you who have never known the Savior as your personal helper and friend and Redeemer, will you not follow her example to-night? You have been living as if there were no God, no Christ, no heaven, no immortal life; surely it is not strange that you have not found the Lord. Begin now, this very hour, to live as though there were a God who gave his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for your salvation. Begin now to do whatever a Christian ought to do. Begin now in the path of obedience. Confess Christ openly and frankly, and there shall come to you the quickening of the Holy Spirit, the forgiveness of your sins, the conscious witness in your spirit that you are a child of God.

XI

THE BRAZEN SERPENT AND THE UPLIFTED CHRIST.

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." —*John* iii. 14, 15.

I AM greatly impressed with the message that is in this scripture to those of us who are already Christians. It expresses very clearly our duty to lift up the Lord Jesus Christ before the eyes of the world. John Ruskin, in his description of the artistic glories of St. Mark's Church, Venice, says that "Here are all the successions of crowded imagery, showing the passions and pleasures of human life, symbolized together, and the mystery of its redemption; for the maze of interwoven lines and changeful pictures lead always at last to the cross, lifted and carved in every place and upon every stone; sometimes with the serpent of eternity wrapped around it, sometimes with doves beneath its arms and sweet herbage growing forth from its feet; but conspicuous most of all on the

great rood that crosses the altar, raised in bright blazonry against the shadow of the apse. It is the cross that is first seen and always burning in the center of the temple; and every dome and hollow of its roof has the figure of Christ in the utmost heights of it, raised in power, returning in judgment."

Every Christian life ought to follow that example. At the top of every ambition ought to be the figure of Jesus Christ. High above all else, attracting more attention than anything else in our daily living, should be our devotion to the cause of Jesus Christ. Let us ask ourselves the heart-searching question to-night, whether we are so living from day to day that everybody who sees us, and knows us, recognizes as our chief characteristic that we are honoring the Savior, and holding him forth before the eyes of all men as the one to whom they may look and be saved.

There is a quaint little story that may have just the message that some one needs. Jacob Gay had been to church one morning, and his wife Rachel had not. When he came home she asked him, "Had a good sermon, Jacob?"

"Complete, Rachel," the old man said.

Rachel was not very well and could not go to meeting much, and so she wanted her husband to

tell her about the sermon and the singing and the people.

"Good singing, Jacob?"

"I am sure I couldn't tell you."

"Many people out to-day?"

"I don't know."

"Why, Jacob, what is the matter? What are you thinking about?"

"The sermon."

"What was the text?"

"I don't think there was any. At least I didn't hear it."

"I declare, Jacob, I do believe you slept all the time."

"Indeed, I didn't. I never was so wide awake."

"What was the subject then?"

"As near as I can remember, it was me."

"You! Jacob Gay!"

"Yes, mother. You think it a poor subject. I am sure I thought so too."

"Who preached? Our minister?"

"No, he didn't preach—not to me, at any rate. 'Twas a woman—a young woman too."

"Why, Mr. Gay. You don't mean it, surely. Those woman's rights' folks haven't got into our pulpit?"

"Well, not exactly. The minister preached from the pulpit, but I could not listen. I was

thinking about my sermon. I will tell you about it. You know that young woman at the post-office, Mrs. Hyde's niece. She and I were the first ones at meeting, and we sat by the stove warming. I have seen her a good deal in the post-office and at her aunt's when I was there at work. She is a pleasant-spoken and a nice, pretty girl. We were talking about the meeting. You know there is quite a revival going on. She was speaking of this one and that one, who was converted. There was quite a silence, and then she said, sort of low and trembling in her voice, and a little pink flush on her cheek, and the tears just a starting:

"'Oh, Mr. Gay, some of us were saying at the prayer-meeting last night that we did so want you to be a Christian.'

"Her cheeks flushed redder, and the tears fell. I knew she felt it, and it was a cross for her to say it. I never was so taken back in all my life.

"'Why, bless your soul,' I said, 'my child, I have been a member of the church forty years.'

"My tears came then, and I guess my cheeks would have been redder than hers, if they were not so tanned.

"'Do excuse me, Mr. Gay,' she said. 'Excuse me for hurting your feelings, but I didn't know you were a Christian. I never saw you at prayer-

meeting or Sabbath-school, nor heard you say anything about it when others were testifying, nor at the altar when others were seeking. I am so sorry I have hurt your feelings.'

"'Tut, tut, child,' I answered. 'No harm done. I am glad you thought about an old man. I am a member as I say, but I haven't worked at it much, I'll allow. I've been making excuses for myself, but I am afraid the Lord wouldn't accept them.'

"Just then the people began to come, and I took my seat; but the looks and words of that young woman went to my heart. I couldn't think of anything else. They preached to me all the meeting-time. To think that some of the young folks in town didn't know I was a member, and were anxious and concerned for the old man! And as I thought about it I said to myself, 'Jacob Gay, you've been a silent partner long enough. It is time you woke and worked for the Lord; time to let your light shine so that the young folks can see it.'"

Are there not some here this evening that need just the message of this simple story? I do not bring any railing accusation against you. You are not an intentional hypocrite, and you mean to be a Christian. But have you ever considered how little outward manifestation you have given

the world that you are in deed and in truth a devoted follower of the Lord Jesus Christ? Will you not begin now to lift Christ up before all that know you, as your own Savior, and the Savior of every one who will look unto him? I am satisfied that if all the Sunday-school teachers of this church, and class-leaders, and parents, and men and women in positions of influence, would, with consecrated fidelity and love, lift up Christ before their scholars and their children, their employees, their neighbors, there would be hundreds of people converted in the next few weeks.

Dr. Young, of the *Central Christian Advocate*, related some months ago the story of a revival meeting of great interest in a western city. During the meeting all the Sunday-school superintendents and Sunday-school teachers of the city were called together for consultation and prayer. The leader laid upon their hearts and consciences the spiritual condition and needs of their scholars, and urged upon them the request that the next day, which was the Sabbath, should be devoted entirely to revival services in the schools. In one of these schools was a young lady who had charge of a class of fifteen young ladies. On this Saturday night she was aroused to a strange, new sense of responsibility, concern, and anxiety, in behalf of her class. They were nearly all unsaved. She

looked back over the past and lamented over her ill-used opportunities, and pleaded to God for help and guidance in the work of leading the unconverted to the Savior. She was so deeply moved that she found it almost impossible to rest; she spent nearly the whole night in meditation and prayer and preparation for the morrow. She prayed especially for the presence and help of the Holy Spirit.

The result was that she went to the school on the next day burdened with a sense of responsibility for her class and all aglow with a desire to bring them to Jesus. She found in the very opening of the service a tender solemnity pervading the school; an unwonted seriousness on every face. The superintendent, in his prayer, spoke with tremulous utterances, and prayed with pathetic power for teacher and scholar, and especially for the unconverted. And then came the earnest, heart-searching conversation which the teachers had with their scholars on the one question asked in the school that day, "Have you given your heart to the Savior?"

This one teacher, whose story we have been telling, depending on God for help, turned to her class, and as she talked to them concerning their duty to Christ, the deadly nature of sin, the awful danger of living in it, the obligation to help others,

there was a new tremor in her voice and an unwonted moisture in her eyes. Her own serious prayerfulness proved contagious; one by one the members of the class began to yield to the call of the Master and to the gracious influences which at flood tide swept all about them. When that glorious Sunday-school hour was ended that day, in her class thirteen out of fifteen young ladies had accepted Christ as their personal Redeemer. What a glorious hour that was for that teacher, and how permanent the joy of it! Through all eternity the music of that hour will echo and re-echo in glorious harmony. I would to God that there might be many who would follow this example in our own Sunday-school and church. There are no rewards so sweet and precious as those which come from holding up Christ faithfully before the perishing and the lost, and winning them to look upon him whom to know aright is life eternal.

To those who are not Christians there could not be a more hopeful scripture than this. The picture takes us back in Bible story to one of the most interesting scenes of Israel's wanderings in the desert. Travelers tell us that to this day a mottled snake with fiery red spots upon its head abounds at certain seasons in the Arabah. It is the dread of the fisherman, and is peculiarly dan-

gerous to the bare-legged, sandaled Bedouins. So inflammable is its bite that it is likened to fire coming through the veins; so intense its venom, and so rapid its action, that the bite is fatal in a few hours. The body swells with a fiery eruption. The tongue is consumed with thirst; and the wretched victim writhes in agony till death brings release. This horrible pest suddenly appeared in the camp of Israel in large numbers. From crevices in the rocks, from holes in the sand, from beneath the scanty herbage, these fiery-headed snakes swarmed into every tent. It was idle to try to run away from them, and killing seemed hardly to diminish their number. On every side men, women and children were crying in anguish, unable to help each other or to save themselves. In this hour of their emergency which had come upon them because of their stubbornness and their sin against God, "the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he may take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole, and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass that if a serpent

had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived."

This is the picture which Jesus brings back to the mind of Nicodemus, and says to him in the language of the scripture we are studying, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

The place where the Israelites were bitten by the fiery serpents and where Moses saved them under God's direction, by the serpent of brass, was a place famous for its mines of brass, and no doubt Moses took the brass out of the very place where the serpents were, and found the remedy in the midst of the danger. So the Lord Jesus Christ came down from heaven, and was born into the midst of our life, was born under the law that he might redeem them that were under the law, bore the burdens and pains and aches of our flesh, was subject to hunger and weariness with us, was tempted in all points like as we are, took not hold upon the seed of angels, but upon the seed of Abraham. How complete was his humiliation! He compares himself even to the serpent of brass that was lifted upon a pole before the dying camp, and says that as the bitten Israelites looked at that and were saved, so all that are bitten by the still

more terrible serpent of sin may look to him and find salvation.

The serpent of brass was an emblem of God's presence. All who looked at it expected to be healed, not because of the brass serpent alone, but because of their faith in the mercy and faithfulness of God who had ordained it. So we look unto Christ as God's remedy for sin. He is our sacrifice. God hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all. We may leave our burden of sin with the great sin-bearer, and become new creatures in Christ Jesus.

What a terrible suggestion is here of the deadly character of sin! The venom of the serpent—it is to that it is compared. Once in southern Oregon, four thousand miles from here, I knew a man who had been bitten by a rattlesnake. Some temporary antidote was used, and it was hoped that he had entirely recovered. But something of the deadly virus was left in his system. And every year for ten years, when the season came on in which he had been bitten, and the anniversary of the time approached, the limb that had been bitten would become swollen and angry-looking, and he would be sick for many days; then it would pass away, and his normal health would return. But he lived in constant dread of some fatal result, and sure enough, the tenth year, when the angry symptoms returned, he grew worse and worse until

he became wildly insane, and after a few weeks died with the most horrible suffering. Oh, my dear friend, it is to such a thing as that, the venom of a poisonous serpent, that your Savior compares the poison of sin. Why will you not turn away from it when the invitation is so gracious and so loving and so universal? "Whosoever believeth in him." Shall not the "whosoever" include you to-night?

X

GOD'S LOVE AND ITS GIFT.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—*John* iii. 16.

I AM conscious at the beginning that I have assumed an impossible task; but it is a task so precious and so glorious that I would rather fail, honestly trying to accomplish it, than to succeed in any other. My task is to try to tell you about the love of God. I desire to lay the emphasis upon that little word with only two letters, "So." "God *so* loved the world;" who is able to tell how much that means? Mr. Spurgeon once exclaimed: "Come, ye surveyors, bring your chains, and try to make a survey of this word 'so.' Nay, that is not enough. Come hither, ye that make our national surveys, and lay down charts for all nations. Come ye, who map the sea and land, and make a chart of this word 'so.' Nay, I must go further. Come hither, ye astronomers, that with your optic glasses spy out spaces before which imagination staggers, come hither and calculate imaginations worthy of all your powers.

When you have measured between the horns of space, here is a task that will defy you—'God so loved the world.' If you enter into that, you will know that all this love is to you—that while Jehovah loves the world, yet he loves you as much as if there were nobody else in all the world to love." "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son."

The story is told of a child in Luther's time who had been taught to think of God only with dread, as of a terrible judge. In her stern home the name of God had been mentioned only to terrify and frighten her. But one day in her father's printing office, she picked up a scrap of paper, and found on it the first words of this verse, "God so loved the world that he gave"—— The remaining words were torn off; but even in this mere fragment there was a revelation to her. It told her that God loved the world, loved it well enough to give something. What he gave she did not know, but it was a great deal for him to give anything to it. The new thought brought great joy to her heart. It changed all her conceptions of God. She learned to think of him as one who loved her, as her friend, ready to give her rich gifts and all good, and this thought brightened and transformed her life.

What a marvelous thing love is! What mira-

cles it can work! Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst relates an incident which came under his observation, concerning a little fellow who at the age of eight was regarded by the rest of the boys as being only about a quarter-witted. It was the result of some infantile disease. His father, whose name is known almost everywhere throughout the land as one of the foremost among educators, took personal charge of his little boy's education. The other boys despised the boy and pitied his father. If the little fellow had been sent to an ordinary school he would probably have brought up at an insane asylum before he was grown. As it was, he ended by going to Oxford, and carrying off a prize. That great-minded, great-hearted man, his father, got clear over on to the inside of the poor, dwarfed possibility of a boy, and by so loving him that he gave himself, saved him. It was his great genius as a teacher that by the aid of his love he could at one and the same time be a great, wise, gifted man, and a puny, feeble-minded child. No genius could have ever done it alone, it was his love that made it possible. No one is large enough to put himself in the place of another, and give himself for him, unless he loves him. "God so loved the world," because he was the world's father, because we who are of the world are his children, and with all a father's sympathy and

tenderness he put himself in our place, and came down and took upon himself our flesh, and got underneath us, that he might lift us up.

The source of all our love to God is the knowledge that he loves us. John says, "We love him, because he first loved us." The knowledge that God's love pursues us in our wickedness and sin, will not give us up even when we are unlovable, cannot help but appeal to our hearts. But when we begin to measure his love by the tender, suffering life of Jesus Christ, and by his dying love upon the cross, we are overwhelmed with a sense of the depths of the love of God for us. What more wonderful declaration could there be than this, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son"? As the eloquent Dr. McClintock once said, What is the cross, but the highest, most complete manifestation of the love of God? And when the despairing eye of a poor sinner once catches a glimpse of the cross of Christ with this light of love upon it, the hardened soul no longer looks on God as the infinite Avenger, but as the compassionate Father! He sees that God loves him—him, wretched, miserable, undone—him, sunken, it may be, to the very depths of despair—him, an object almost of hatred to himself and from whom, perhaps, his friends turn away with contempt. And when this is once realized,

the chord is touched, the only chord in his heart that could be touched—the hard rock is cleft and the living waters gush forth. "He loves me! then I love him."

> "'Tis love! 'tis love! Thou diedst for me!
> I hear thy whisper in my heart;
> The morning breaks, the shadows flee;
> Pure, universal love thou art:
> To me, to all, thy mercies move;
> Thy nature and thy name is Love!"

And, brothers and sisters, if we are to share the work of the Lord in winning men to righteousness, we must share this great love for them. We too must learn how to put ourselves in our brother's place. We must love people, not in the multitude and in the mass merely; but as the great king of day, who shines for all the earth, sends definite heat and light down to each tiny flower, and loves it into vigor, and blossom, and fragrance, so we must seek after men and women with definite earnestness, thinking about them, praying about them, searching out their needs, loving them personally as God does, inscribing their names on our hearts, and thus win them by the strength of our love.

Mr. H. B. Gibbud tells an interesting story about his work among prisoners: He was going one day

from cell to cell, when one man called him back and asked him if he remembered him. He did not.

"Well," said he, "I remember you, and you got me out of one of the 'dives' in Mulberry Bend, in New York city, took me to the Florence Mission, and gave me a note to the 'Home for Intemperate Men.' Do you remember?"

He could not, having done similar acts for a great number.

"You will remember me, I think," said the prisoner, "when I tell you the circumstances. I was nearly naked; you got some clothes for me. I was shivering with delirium tremens, and could not dress myself, so you dressed me; now you remember?"

Mr. Gibbud was still unable to recollect him.

"Well, there is one thing more, and that was what broke me up. After you had dressed me, you said, 'You want to look nice, so I'll black your boots,' and you did. Now, I could not tell to save my neck what you said about Christ; I did not want to be better; I did not go to the 'Home,' all I wanted was what I could get out of you; but your blacking my boots—I have never been able to get away from that. I did not want your religion, but to think that you cared enough about my soul to black my boots—that has followed me ever since, and when I have been drunk and

stupid, that thing would haunt me. I did not want your religion then, but I do now. And I think God has brought me here to meet you again, and I want you to pray for me."

And so right there, behind "gates of brass, and bars of iron," he led this poor sinful soul to the Lord Jesus Christ, "who taketh away the sin of the world," and there and then began a new life. It was "a brand plucked from the burning," but one for whom the Savior died, and for whom all heights of noble character were possible. Now I presume that, to the most of us, it seems an exaggerated thing for a man to do, to polish a poor drunken tramp's boots, as a scheme to try to win him to Christ, to save his soul; and perhaps you shudder within yourself and say, "I could not do that, surely I am not asked to do such a thing as that," and yet, my brother, let us turn it over and look at it from another standpoint a little while. If Jesus Christ were to come back to earth again, prosecuting his mission to save the lost, and were to come into this church to-day, footsore and weary, and with soiled shoes, and I knew it was the Christ, he who died upon the cross for my poor soul, don't you think my cheeks would flush with pride at the opportunity to get down out of this pulpit, off this platform, and polish his shoes? Is there one of you good women who would not be

glad to do it, even on your knees in the aisle of this church? And yet the Savior says that what we do unto one of the least of these, his brethren, he regards as though it were done unto himself.

Mr. Gibbud fairly loved that poor man into the kingdom. So God's love is our ransom. He "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

I do believe that this love of God for men is the greatest key, the surest key, we can use to open the heart of anybody we want to win to Christ. Margaret Meredith tells in a recent number of the *Outlook* how a notorious rough named Ike Miller, the terror of a mining district in the North of England, was converted. Henry Morehouse, a young preacher scarce out of his boyhood, was preaching to a company of these miners, when Ike Miller came in and took a seat near the front. Preacher and helpers trembled; for this wicked man had threatened to break up the services.

The sermon was on the love of Christ, and the young preacher longed to reach the heart of the wild, grimed miner who sat so strangely quiet, gazing into his face. He could but think that there was an eager look in those hard eyes. But when the meeting was over, some of the good old men gathered around the preacher regretfully.

"Ah, Henry, you didn't preach right. You ought to have preached at Ike Miller. You had a great opportunity and you lost it. That softly sort of preaching won't do him any good. What does he care about the love of Christ? You ought to have warned him. You ought to have frightened him, and tried to make him see his dreadful danger, and the dreadful punishment he is going to get." The young preacher only said in a childlike tone, "I am real sorry I did not preach to him right. I did want so to help him."

Meanwhile the big miner was tramping home. His wife—poor, gaunt woman! heard his step and started: "Home so early?" she involuntarily cried, and ran in front of the children who were crowding themselves into a corner. But as he entered she stared in bewilderment; he was not drunk; he was not scowling.

He put his arms around her and kissed her, and said, "Lass, God has brought your husband back to you;" then, gathering up the shrinking children, "My little boy and girl, God has brought your father back to you. Now let us all pray," and he knelt down. There was a long pause, a silence but for many sobs; he could not think of any words; his heart was praying, but Ike Miller had uttered no prayer and heard no prayer since he was a little boy. At last words from those distant days came

back to him—something that his mother had taught him; and from that hovel floor, in the midst of that remnant of an abused family, to be abused no more, he sounded out in rugged gutturals, groaned out through his sobs:

> "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
> Look upon a little child;
> Pity my simplicity,
> Suffer me to come to thee."

And the Savior, who said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," let him come. He had been loved back to the fold. The one chord left in his hard heart had been touched, and it awoke to salvation.

Now let us read all the text, though we can only glance at it long enough to see who it is for. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Thank God, nobody shall perish who clings to the cross. Whosoever shall accept Jesus Christ as his sacrifice for sin shall never perish. If there are any doubtful ones here this morning, kindred to Mr. Fearing in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," take the comfort of this glorious declaration to your hearts. Mr. Fearing, you know, was always

afraid he should fail of reaching the end of his journey. Everything frightened him that he heard anybody speak of, if it had but the least appearance of opposition in it. He lay roaring at the Slough of Despond for more than a month. Though several others passed on and offered to lend him a hand of help, he did not dare to venture. Yet he would not go back again. He said he would die if he did not come to the Celestial City; and yet he was dejected with every difficulty, and stumbled at every straw that anybody cast in his way. Well, after he had lain at the Slough for a great while, one sunshiny morning he gathered up courage somehow, and ventured and got over; but when he was over he would scarcely believe it. He had, Bunyan declares, a Slough of Despond in his mind, a slough that he carried everywhere he went with him. When he finally came to the Hill of Difficulty he made no stick at that, nor did he much fear the lions; for his trouble was not about such things as these, but he was afraid that somehow he would perish at last outside the gate of the kingdom. If there are any Mr. or Mrs. or Miss Fearings here this morning, I pray God that this glorious scripture may take this Slough of Despond out of your mind forever.

There can be no doubt that this message is for every one of us. This blessed word, "whosoever,"

makes it impossible for anybody to thrust it aside as belonging to some one else more than to himself. "I thank God for this word 'whosoever,'" said Richard Baxter; "did it read, There is mercy for Richard Baxter, I am so vile, so sinful, that I would have thought it must have meant some other Richard Baxter; but this word 'whosoever' includes the worst of all the Baxters that ever lived."

The chaplain of a large prison once related a story to Mr. D. L. Moody, which illustrates this thought of Baxter. The prison commissioners had got the consent of the governor of the State to grant pardons to five men, on account of their good behavior. The governor had required that the record was to be kept secret. The men were to know nothing about it; and at the end of six months the criminals were brought out, the roll was called, and the president of the commission came up and spoke to them. Then putting his hand in his pocket, he drew out the papers and said to those eleven hundred prisoners, "I hold in my hand pardons for five men." The suspense was something awful. Every man held his breath, and was as silent as death. Then the commissioner went on to tell how they obtained these pardons; that it was the governor who granted them. When he had got that far in his speech,

the suspense of the men was so terrible the chaplain begged him to read the names of those who were pardoned before he spoke any further. The first name was given out thus, "Reuben Johnson will come out and get his pardon." He held out the papers, but no one came. He looked all around, expecting to see a man spring forward at once; still no one arose, and he turned to the officer of the prison and said, "Are all the convicts here?" "Yes," was the reply. "Then Reuben Johnson will come and get his pardon."

The real Reuben Johnson was all this time looking around to see where Reuben was. The chaplain beckoned to him, and he turned and looked around and behind him, thinking some other man must be meant. A second time he beckoned to Reuben, and called to him, and the second time the man looked around to see where Reuben was, until at last the chaplain said to him, "You are the man, Reuben;" and he rose up out of his seat and sank back again, thinking it could not be true. He had been there for nineteen years, having been placed there for life; and when he came up and took his pardon, he could hardly believe his eyes, and he went back to his seat and wept like a child. O my brothers, my sisters, are there any of you this morning who have heard and read the glorious promises of God's book, offering forgiveness of

sin, offering a cleansed and purified heart, promising lofty and holy ideals, pledging peace and joy unspeakable and full of glory, portraying a pathway that shall get brighter and brighter unto the perfect day, and have you turned away from it with a sigh and said, "That might have been possible to me once, but it is too late, I have been a prisoner to evil habits too long, I have given myself over to be a man of the world, until I must not imagine that I shall ever emerge into anything so good and glorious as that. It is a beautiful vision, but, alas, it is too good to be true for me"? O my dear friend, let me ring this glorious word in your ears to-day—"whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." That "whosoever" means you. Whoever you are, and wherever you are, you may write your name in it, and use it as a check on the bank of heaven. Oh, what a glorious message from heaven that is!

When Bonpland, the celebrated botanist, climbed one of the loftiest peaks of the Andes Mountains, he found that it was a volcano. The rim of the crater was covered with scoriæ, and everything looked like desolation and ruin, but in one little crevice a bit of soil had drifted, and there was a tiny, beautiful flower. There in the midst of ashes and lava, with death all about it, it blossomed in loveliness. The showers had fallen upon it, the sun

had wooed it from a seed which some bird had dropped there, probably; and there on the edge of this burning crater it shed forth its fragrance. That little flower, growing there on the edge of the crater, is an illustration of the unsearchable riches of the love of God. He follows us and plants the flowers of his love on the very edge of everlasting ruin. He gives me permission—nay, more than that, he puts it on me as my solemn duty to follow the sinner in his downward course to the very last, and even to whisper in his dying ear on the very verge of the crater of hell itself, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

"O love divine, how sweet thou art!
When shall I find my willing heart
All taken up by thee?"

XIII

THE FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATER.

"The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."—*John* iv. 14.

This story of Christ at the wayside well, with its figures of the well and the living water running through the conversation, is of great interest to any man or woman here who was born in the country, and who has a memory of the wells near the old farm-houses over all the country-side. My own mind is full of such pictures. They come up before me now, the different wells that I knew in my boyhood. One had a square well-curb, which surrounded the well, with a little roof over the top to keep the rain from beating in or the sun from shining down into its depths. And inside, under the roof, fastened to the long rope, which in turn was fastened to the windlass, was an old, oaken bucket, like unto that about which Samuel Woodworth sings. May God make the oldest of our hearts mellow again as we recall it.

"How dear to this heart are the scenes of my childhood,
When fond recollection presents them to view!
The orchard, the meadow, the deep-tangled wildwood,
And every loved spot which my infancy knew;
The wide-spreading pond, and the mill whichstood by it,
The bridge and the rock where the cataract fell;
The cot of my father, the dairy-house nigh it,
And e'en the rude bucket which hung in the well:
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-cover'd bucket, which hung in the well.

"That moss-cover'd vessel I hail as a treasure;
For often, at noon, when return'd from the field,
I found it the source of an exquisite pleasure,
The purest and sweetest that Nature can yield.
How ardent I seized it, with hands that were glowing!
And quick to the white-pebbled bottom it fell;
Then soon, with the emblem of truth overflowing,
And dripping with coolness, it rose from the well:
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-cover'd bucket arose from the well.

"How sweet from the green, mossy brim to receive it,
As poised on the curb it inclined to my lips!
Not a full blushing goblet could tempt me to leave it,
Though fill'd with the nectar that Jupiter sips,
And now, far removed from the loved situation,
The tear of regret will intrusively swell,
As fancy reverts to my father's plantation,
And sighs for the bucket which hangs in the well:
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-cover'd bucket, which hangs in the well."

What an emblem the old well of living water is of the generosity and fulness of the upspringing peace which the Savior plants in every trusting heart! The water from the old well did not need any ice to get it ready for use. It was a nectar fit for the king on the hottest day of summer, and it never needed a plumber to keep it going in winter.

The story we are studying to-night had its setting in a country of wells—a dry country, not well watered, where the possession of a well of water was a matter of great importance. This well of Sychar where Jesus had this immortal conversation with the woman of Samaria was then fifteen centuries old; and now, after the lapse of more than eighteen hundred years, still exists.

Let us learn the great lesson of our theme to-night, that no one is fitted for a safe journey through this dry and thirsty world who does not carry within his own heart a living fountain of spiritual life, the source of whose confidence and hope is not ever green in his own soul. Every wayside well will at one time or another be dried up by the drought and in the time of our greatest emergency fail to give us comfort. Every earthly source of satisfaction is of this character. What is more common for men to put their trust in than their health, their strength of body, the physical consciousness which they feel, of being able to

bear burdens, endure toil and exposure? Other men belong to the sick and dying world, but they belong to the strong, and the healthy, and the well. I shall not soon forget a conversation which I had with a friend, a physician whose pastor I had been for several years, immediately before coming to this church. I went to bid him good-by, and just before I parted from him he said, "What can I say to you that will be of help to you about your health?" And then he went on to give me some good advice, told me I was getting to be stoop-shouldered, ought to throw my shoulders back, and learn how to walk. And he went on to tell me of some experiments he had been making with himself, some exercises which he had been going through, how easy it was now for him to walk up-stairs, compared with some years before, and declared that he never felt so strong and well, that he believed this new system of exercise would add twenty years to his life. That was less than nine months ago, and last Saturday night he came home, sank into his chair and said, "Wife, the end is at hand," and in a few moments was dead. The well of physical strength had dried up.

Another common source of earthly confidence, a well to which men turn with profound satisfaction, is a good name, a splendid reputation; and they have a scriptural right for that. Solomon says a

good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, but, alas, both of them are only wayside wells that are likely to be dried up. For our good name depends not only upon what we do, but upon what other people think we do; and many a man who has rejoiced for years in a well-earned fame has lived to see it torn to tatters and every vestige of it swept away through no fault of his own.

Money is another source from whence men and women constantly expect to get comfort and support. They have a confidence, an assurance, that so much money coming in every week, every month, every year, will make their mountain to stand sure, and be a perennial source of enjoyment and peace. And there is much reason to expect that money will accomplish many things. It is many times social and political power while it lasts; but, after all, it is never moral power, and is never able to give any real peace. Not only so, but it is likely to vanish away at any time. Thousands of people every year, who a little while ago thought they were certain of a sure income, large enough to supply all their wants and even luxuries as long as they should live, and leave an abundant reserve for their children, have suddenly awakened to the fact that their riches have taken wings and flown away. And the most conservative, wise

financiers of the world are powerless to foresee or ward off many of the dangers to fortune. But even if they keep it through life, it is a well that dries up entirely at death. We brought nothing with us into this world, and we can take nothing away; it must all be given up at the grave; none of it will pass in the exchange of the spiritual world beyond.

Another most beautiful source of comfort and joy, and one which is very dear and precious to many of us, is the pure and noble joy which we draw from our happy homes. Many people who do not care much for money, except as it ministers to their home life, and many who are not fascinated by the glittering baubles of fashion and fame, revel in the sweet luxury of their loving and sympathetic homes. But pure and noble as this is, and satisfying as are the pleasures of a pure home, it is, alas! after all, only a wayside well at best, that is likely at any time to be blown upon by a cold breath, and destroyed.

I doubt not there are some here to-night who remember only a little time ago when they looked forward to long years of such comfort and rest, but now the home is broken and never can be gathered together again upon earth. There are some of you who can never hear the word home spoken without grief. In the valley of the shadow of

death you have learned to appreciate Jean Ingelow's sweet song:

A Song of a Boat:—
There was once a boat on a billow;
Lightly she rocked to her port remote,
And the foam was white in her wake like snow,
And her frail mast bowed when the breeze would blow
And bent like a wand of willow.

I shaded mine eyes one day when a boat
Went curtseying over the billow,
I marked her course till—a dancing mote—
She faded out on the moon-lit foam,
And I stayed behind in the dear loved home;
And my thoughts all day were about the boat,
And my dreams upon the pillow.

I pray you hear my song of a boat,
For it is but short:—
My boat, you shall find none fairer afloat,
In river or port,
Long I looked out for the lad she bore,
On the open, desolate sea,
And I think he sailed to the heavenly shore,
For he came not back to me,—
Ah me!

A Song of a Nest:—
There was once a nest in a hollow,
Down in the mosses and knot-grass pressed,
Soft and warm, and full to the brim—
Vetches leaned over it purple and dim,
With buttercup buds to follow.

I pray you hear my song of a nest,
For it is not long:—
You shall never light, in a summer quest
The bushes among—
Shall never light on a prouder sitter,
A fairer nestful, nor ever know
A softer sound than their tender twitter,
That wind-like did come and go.

I had a nestful once of my own,
Ah, happy, happy I!
Right dearly I loved them; but when they were grown
They spread out their wings to fly—
Oh! one after one they flew away
Far up to the heavenly blue,
To the better country, the upper day,
And—I wish I was going too.

I pray you, what is the nest to me,
My empty nest?
And what is the shore where I stood to see
My boat sail down to the west?
Can I call that home where I anchor yet,
Though my good man has sailed?
Can I call that home where my nest was set,
Now all its hope hath failed?
Nay, but the port where my sailor went,
And the land where my nestlings be—
There is the home where my thoughts are sent,
The only home for me—
Ah me!"

And so there is no wayside well that shall not dry up and leave us without comfort. But blessed

be God for the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ, who comes to plant in our hearts a well of living water—not a stagnant pool, but an upspringing fountain that shall be ever fresh and new. What a blessing it would be for all these young men and women if in their youth this fountain of immortal youth could be started flowing in all their hearts! I have been reading this week an article by Dr. Barrows in the *Christian Register*, entitled "The Hoary Heart," in which he shows with great clearness how easy it is in this rushing time of ours to waste all the glorious strength and privileges of youth, so that the best possibilities of life are wrecked, and its best hopes impossible almost before manhood or womanhood is reached. Youth, he declares, is only the velvet on the flower of life. While we say it, it is passing; it is gone; before we have time to note them, the first gray hairs have appeared, the first wrinkles about the eyes. But sadder far than these physical tokens are the signs that the power of enjoyment and self-renewal have been wasted. While the youthful glow still lingers on the cheek, the heart has begun to grow old. Oh, a man does not need to go to the Bible to find proof of God and immortality. He may find it in the power to punish which God has put in one's own body. A man may suck poison if he will, but it will torture him in return.

The soul avenging itself for its own sins and abuses shows it has a power lying beyond the sphere of its will. The stories they sometimes tell us of a rattlesnake when crazed with anger driving its fangs into its own body until it dies of its own poison, are a fair illustration of the way a depraved soul often stings itself to ruin. Its weapons are disgust, satiety, that lead to suicide or insanity, or to what is far more common, a miserable, useless death-in-life.

The faculty of relish, Dr. Barrows aptly says, is the most delicate and vibratory and responsive of all the qualities of the soul. God has written his sternest judgment over against the abuse of the good gift of enjoyment. The power to punish lies hidden in every emotion, every impulse, every desire. What is so terrible as to see men or women, created with a more delicate organism than any musical instrument that ever was made, but who have so abused the delicate creation placed in their hands that it is all benumbed and helpless, and in place of the old gladness and exuberant joy, there is the deadly oncoming of indifference; the *blasé*, worn-out temper; fires burned down to the ashes; a black ring of dead things; a smoky pit; a burned-out crater where there was once a rose garden; only loathing

at what once caused the heart glad joy and delight; can there be anything more terrible than that? Beauty, love, faith, hope, all fallen to rottenness; cynicism and cursing in place of prayer and song. These are what comes to those who live as though they were mere creatures of the earth, as though there were no God and no immortality.

Dear friend, is this picture a portrait of your own career? Have you thus made a wreckage of life's first glorious possibilities? There may have been no actual debauchery; you may have had sufficient strength to keep the respectable appearance and to win what is called success in the world, while the gold of your holiest feelings was scattered to the winds. If so, I bring you tonight the message of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was able to take this poor, wasted heart, that throbbed in the bosom of the woman of Samaria, and despite its waste and sin, to plant within it the fountain of living water. And not only to you do I appeal, but with especial emphasis and with especial yearning in my soul do I come to the young, to those before whom the fascinations of sin are as yet largely only a temptation. I beg of you that you cherish your innocency, that you cherish all the generous impulses and noble inspirations of your youth, and now while life is

fresh and strong, you invite that full and perfect fellowship with Jesus Christ, which shall cause to spring up in your heart an ever-living fountain that shall make all your life, like Damascus, "a garden of the Lord."

XIV

THE FORGOTTEN WATERPOT AND THE NEW CONVERT'S SERMON.

"The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"—*John* iv. 28, 29.

"And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, he told me all that ever I did."—*John* iv. 39.

It is interesting to study the transformation that came over this woman, which caused her to forget her waterpot. That waterpot is a very essential feature of this story, for it represents the thing that the woman had on hand at the time. She had come purposely from the city on the hill to this well, to fill her waterpot and carry it home for the daily necessities of life, and something which Christ said to her so filled her heart and mind, that she forgot all about what she came for, and left her waterpot and hastened away into the city to tell the story of what had transpired to others. I have always been thankful for that forgotten waterpot. If I were hunting after relics

I would like to have that. Nothing shows the genuineness of the woman's conversion more than that. It changed the purpose and plan of the woman's life; it set up a new standard of values for her. The waterpot did not seem so important as it did an hour ago when she came and found Jesus at the well. She saw that spiritual things, those things that are unseen and eternal, were the realities and the things of most value. Every genuine conversion to Christ does that. All people do not have the same experience in many ways. The way men and women receive good news depends largely upon their temperament. Some people when they are saved from their sins are full of ecstasy and joy, and others of a different temperament, just as truly saved, nestle down as it were into the arms of the Savior in quiet peace. But every genuine conversion has this effect, that it changes the individual's standard of values. Earthly things are no more so important as spiritual things. To please God, to live in fellowship with Jesus Christ, to carry the message of salvation to other souls, these become the great questions of life.

Now let us see what it was that so stirred this woman up, and so absorbed her attention that she forgot her waterpot. It comes out very clearly in the conversation as it is recorded here in this

chapter. The Savior had made the astonishing statement to her, which I considered last evening, that if she should ask of him, he would give her living water that would spring up an abundant fountain in her heart always, ever fresh and new. And the woman by way of answer said to him, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." Then I can imagine Christ looking her straight in the eyes as he seemed abruptly to change the entire tide of the conversation and probe deep into her inmost heart. He said, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." As some one has well said, she asked for living water, but she did not know that the well must first be dug. In the depth of her soul, covered over with many strata of sin as it was, there was still left the power of life; but, like the source of a spring, it was hidden. Many a hard rock of impenitence was there, and many a layer of daily transgression, and many a wicked habit, once formable as clay, now hard as granite, and many a deposit of unholy thoughts which had left nothing but their dregs behind. All this had to be dug through before she could have the living water. The command of Jesus, "Go, call thy husband," was the first stroke of the pick breaking up the surface earth and revealing the foulness of the life beneath it.

Could there be a clearer illustration anywhere to show the hatefulness of sin in the sight of Jesus? The heart of Christ went out to this poor woman. He knew her lost condition and he saw something in her that was worth saving, and he longed to do her good; but he shows by these words that there is no hope for salvation until sin is uncovered and confessed and cast out forever. John McNeill, the Scotch evangelist, tells the story of a British officer in India who had been living a lustful and impure life, and went around one evening to argue religion with the chaplain. During their talk the officer said: "Religion is all very well, but you must admit that there are difficulties—about the miracles, for instance." The chaplain knew his man and his sin, his besetting sin, as Jesus knew the besetting sin of this poor woman, and quietly looking him in the face, answered him: "Yes, there are some things in the Bible not very plain, I admit; but the seventh commandment is very plain." The man's temper rose, and he rushed away from the tent. But a little later he came back, no longer to raise false difficulties but to ask how a poor, wicked, British officer might be saved. How many are held back from the Savior by some root sin which they are not willing to give up! O my brother, my sister, you must give up your sins! Your sin may not be this sin which stood be-

tween this poor Samaritan woman and salvation, but your sin,—I do not know what it is, but God knows, and unless it is repented and forgiven, in the great judgment day at last it will be made common property, and the whole assembled world shall know all about it, and it will blight your future and cover you with remorse throughout eternity. You must give up your sin. Why should you not want to give it up? Your sin that mars you, that defiles you, and will damn you unless you can escape from it—your sin which poisons the pure blood of your life, which destroys your peace, which makes you restless and uneasy; which makes your conscience a bed of thorns to lie on; which makes the Bible a book of judgment sentences when it ought to be a book of pillows softer than down for your weary head; which makes God a stern Judge, when he ought to be the most loving Father, comforting you in every sorrow; which makes Jesus the Crucified a witness against you, when he ought to be your Redeemer. Oh, fly from your sin! As Christ taught this woman concerning the coming day of worship, which was then beginning, when all should worship God in spirit and in truth; and standing there before her, revealed unto her that he was the Messiah, the Savior that should come, until her poor, scarred heart believed him, and in her heart she

purposed to forsake her sins and take him to be her Savior; so I pray God that blessed hour may come to you to-night, when you shall have a new vision of the Lord Jesus Christ, when he shall appear to you indeed the one altogether lovely; when, looking into your face, he shall say, "I that speak unto thee am he;" and, like Thomas when he looked on the pierced side and the torn hands and wounded feet and scarred brow of the Master, you may cry, "My Lord and my God!"

Do you wonder after all that the woman forgot her waterpot, and hurried away into the city, telling everywhere about the Savior she had found? In order to do it she had to confess her own sin, for she cried out to every one she met, "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" And the people who had known her, and had known her sinful life, were the first to believe her. They saw that this glorious transformation was too great to be accomplished by any mere human agency. And many of them believed on the Lord because of the saying of this woman.

How characteristic it was of the Savior to reveal his Messiahship to this poor, wicked woman. It is just like our Savior to do that. Christ was always giving his best to the poorest, the weakest and the worst—to those who needed it most. Don't

let anybody stay away from Christ because of their weakness, or because of the exceeding sinfulness of their sin; for it is the very nature of our great Redeemer to give the very best to those who have the greatest need.

I would like to-night to appeal to the highest and noblest motive that is in any human heart. That is the glorious thing about our Christianity that it appeals to the best that is in us. I want to beg of you that you become a Christian to-night, that you come out openly and frankly on the Lord's side, not because of your own need only, but because your coming shall be a gracious and blessed influence upon others. Many of the Samaritans believed upon the Lord Jesus because of this woman's testimony. And no doubt many will be influenced by you. If you will turn to the Lord with a sincere heart, others will follow your example. Thank God, though the poor sinner may have to carry some scar of his sin even after the sin has been washed out by the blood of Jesus Christ, yet he may keep many another from entering the snare by which his own feet were entrapped.

The story is told of a convict in Joliet prison in Illinois, who picked up one day in the prison corridor a scrap of paper, on which were these lines:

I walked through the woodland meadows,
Where sweet the thrushes sing;
And I found on a bed of mosses
A bird with a broken wing.
I healed its wound, and each morning
It sang its old sweet strain;
But the bird with a broken pinion
Never soared as high again.

I found a young life broken
By sin's seductive art;
And touched with a Christlike pity,
I took him to my heart.
He lived with a noble purpose,
And struggled not in vain;
But the life that sin had stricken
Never soared as high again.

But the bird with a broken pinion
Kept another from the snare;
And the life that sin had stricken
Raised another from despair.
Each loss has its compensation,
There is healing for every pain;
But the bird with a broken pinion
Never soars as high again.

The man who found these verses had been converted to Christ in the early part of his imprisonment, and the words came to him with great force. He copied the stanzas and kept them carefully. He thought of his sin and realized how hard it

would be henceforward to make his way in the world. When he came out of prison he resolved to do Christian work among other prisoners. Many looked upon him with suspicion, but God gave him friends, and he gained the confidence of the people wherever he went.

In telling his experience he often recited "The Bird with a Broken Wing." Who the author was he did not know. At length, however, it was learned that the poem was written by Hezekiah Butterworth, who went one day to hear Dr. George C. Lorimer, during his first pastorate in Tremont Temple, Boston, many years ago. The sermon was on "Samson Grinding at the Mill," and during the sermon the preacher said, speaking of Samson, "The bird with a broken pinion never soars as high again." To Mr. Butterworth the words came as a lightning-flash of truth, and he went home and wrote the poem.

Dr. Lorimer afterward went to Chicago and was pastor of the Emmanuel Church, and there one Sunday evening, speaking of the insidiousness of sin, he raised his finger, saying: "It may be, to-night, there is a defaulter here." He happened to point directly at a defaulter. It was God's arrow convicting the guilty one of sin. The man resolved at once to make restitution, desiring to hide his crime until able to restore all he had

taken. But his crime was discovered. He pleaded guilty, and received a two years' sentence to Joliet. This was the man who found in the prison corridor "The Bird with a Broken Wing." It was a true picture of himself, and a remarkable illustration of God's providence that the man who under God had uncovered his sin and caused him to repent was the same man who, years before, had inspired by his own words the poem which was afterward to bring him hope and confidence.

God made that poor man a blessing to many others. It became true of him as is expressed in the song:

> **But the bird with a broken pinion**
> **Kept another from the snare;**
> **And the life that sin had stricken**
> **Raised another from despair.**

So I plead with you to-night to forsake your sin and find salvation not only for your own sake, but for the sake of every tempted soul whom you may thus influence for good.

XV

SCARCITY OF HARVESTERS IN THE WHITE FIELDS.

"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal."—*John* iv. 35, 36.

JESUS was standing with his disciples, looking doubtless over the way toward the city of Samaria. The new-sown fields were perhaps green on every side of them. The harvests of grain were yet four months away. But while the Savior talked with his disciples and they were urging upon him to partake of their evening meal, he, absorbed in that heart-stirring conversation which he had had with the wicked woman who had now gone away into the city to tell everywhere the glad news of his coming, said unto them, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." While they wondered among themselves who had brought him food in their absence, he pointed away toward Samaria to the crowd of people who had been aroused to curiosity and interest by the story of the new con-

vert, and were coming out in the white raiment then commonly worn in that region, making no doubt a picturesque group, their white figures standing out in strong contrast to the green fields about them. The Savior breaks into the conversation of his disciples by exclaiming: "Say not ye, There are yet four months and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." And the Lord delayed there for two days and gathered a large harvest of believers out of that city.

If we are to share the work and the glory of Jesus Christ we must have this same attitude toward humanity. Every man and woman must mean to us a white field where a possible sheaf may be gathered for the heavenly garner. Mr. Spurgeon tells the story of a mountain-side farmer in Switzerland, where land is very precious because rock abounds and the rugged soil is chary in its yielding. The farmer looks about after a little tuft of grass growing on one of the edges of a lofty cliff. From the valley he had caught sight of it and thought of clambering up to where it grew; but the rock is too steep even for so skilful a climber as he. From a ledge near the top of the precipitous wall he looks down, but can see no pathway to the coveted morsel of

green. That armful of grass would feed his goat, or help to fill the barn loft with winter fodder for the cow. Every armful is an item, and he cannot forego that tempting clump. He looks, looks, and looks again, but looks in vain. By and by he fetches his bold boy, who can follow wherever a chamois can climb, but the boy after a hard scramble comes back with the tidings, "Father, it cannot be done." The father's answer is, "My boy, it must be done." It is only an armful, and amounts to very little, but to the poor mountaineer every little is precious. The grass waves in the breeze and scorns the daring climber from below; but where there is a will there is a way; and what cannot be reached from below may be gained from above. With a rope slung around him, or firmly grasped in his accustomed hands, with a stout stick or tree to hold it up above, the Switzer is let down till he gets to the jutting crag; there he stands with his sickle, reaps the grass, ties it into a bundle, puts it under his arm, and climbing back again joyfully returns with his little harvest. That seems poor pay to you for such dangerous toil; but oh, I would to God we had something of that venturesome spirit in seeking for souls! I would we were as careful of them as these poor mountaineers are of little bundles of grass. I would that we were constantly looking up and

down the mountain-sides of our human life, and that when at first glance souls seem to be inaccessible to us, we would go round and round about them, prayerfully, tenderly, lovingly, and when we cannot climb to them from below, we would find some way by the help of God's Spirit to come down to them from above, and thus seek after them until we carry them away rejoicing to the heavenly garner.

If we could only look at men and women through the eyes of Jesus we would know that there is no possible investment of our toil so wisely placed as when seeking after an immortal soul. How the very largeness of material things often deceives us as to the relative value of the earthly and the spiritual. Some one well says: "That little emigrant child that crouches yonder by the hatchway, and looks down with great, astonished eyes on the monster engine below—that little child is a vastly greater wonder than anything about the proudest steamship that ever floated on the deep. There was the unfathomable mystery of its birth, the greater mystery of the union of its body with its soul, the mystery of its moral nature that is to detect the right and the wrong and is to act eternally." Men give their lives to making steamships and controlling them, but greater than steamships or locomotive engines or cathedrals or

giant bridges—greater than all these—is an immortal soul; to so influence it that it may ripen in immortal beauty and be gathered a white sheaf in the Master's garner—that is the most glorious work that hearts and hands may know.

When we appreciate at its full value the worth of a soul, anything that we can do, however insignificant, that may help in the heavenly harvest, will seem to us worth doing. Mr. Moody tells how, when he and Mr. Sankey were in Liverpool, they saw a poor woman one day in the place where the meeting was to be held, an hour before the time, and she stayed right on through the service. She was all worn out with holding her baby through the hours. During the meeting the baby got restless and began to cry. Some of the people looked cross, and Mr. Moody saw that the woman was very uneasy and nervous; she didn't want to disturb the people, and yet didn't want to go. She did her best to quiet the baby, but it would cry, and at last she started to go out. Mr. Moody said: "Let that baby cry if it wants to. I can speak as loud as the baby can cry. Now, don't look at the mother, but just pray that the Lord will bless her. Remember she hasn't any one to take care of that baby, and perhaps she hasn't been in church for years." So the woman stayed, and by and by the baby fell asleep. She listened to

the preaching with tears streaming down her face. At the close of the sermon he asked those who had any desire for salvation to arise, and the first one was that woman. With her baby in her arms she presented herself for prayer. Mr. Moody said it touched his very soul. He asked those who wanted to become Christians to go into the inquiry-room while the congregation were singing. The baby awoke and began to cry again, and the mother got very nervous. Then a great manly six-footer came up to her, and said: "Let me take the baby while you go into the inquiry meeting." Perhaps he had never had a baby in his arms in his life, but he took it and walked up and down, comforting it, before all those eight thousand people. That man was a hero. Perhaps he couldn't do many things to help, but he shared in fellowship with Jesus Christ and was ready to do anything to help save a soul. The mother went into the inquiry-room and found peace and healing for her poor, wounded heart. Then she took her baby and went out into the dark city with the "Light of the World" shining in her heart and illuminating her path, and that brave man had helped to bring it about.

There is no work in all the world that pays like this. No success in business, no victory in politics, no social achievement, will ever give to any

man or any woman such a precious memory to reflect upon as the memory that will be treasured up of a loving and kindly deed done humbly and sincerely to lift up the fallen and win the lost to the Lord Jesus.

On the occasion of John B. Gough's funeral, a little handkerchief was placed over the back of a chair which stood at the head of the coffin. The story of that handkerchief was told by Mr. Gough in a great address in Cooper Institute, twenty-five years ago. He said: "I have in my house a small handkerchief, not worth three cents to you, but you could not buy it from me. A woman brought it and gave it to my wife, and said: 'I am very poor; I would give your husband a thousand pounds if I had it; but I brought this. I married with the fairest and brightest prospects before me; but my husband took to drinking, and everything went. The pianoforte my mother gave, and everything, was sold, until at last I found myself in a miserable room. My husband lay drunk in a corner, and my child that was lying on my knee was restless. I sang "The Light of Other Days has Faded," and wet my handkerchief through with my tears. My husband,' said she to my wife, 'met yours. He spoke a few words and gave a grasp of the hand, and now for six years my husband has been

to me all that a husband can be to a wife, and we are getting our household goods together again. I have brought your husband the very handkerchief I wet through that night with my tears, and I want him, when he is speaking, to remember that he has wiped away those tears from me, I trust in God, forever.' Ah!" said Gough, "these are the trophies that make men glad." May God grant us all some precious trophies of faithful work done for Christ!

Some of you, I have no doubt, have your white field closer to you even than that pointed out by the Savior to his disciples: your wife or your husband, your father or mother, your children, brothers or sisters, some one in your immediate family circle that is very dear and precious to you. Oh, how glorious it would be if every family represented in our church could in this month of consecration be made whole, and each round circle completed, by winning every member of our families to the Lord Jesus Christ! I am sure you may win them if you will make it the one great end of your life, make everything bend to that one purpose, give yourself to it unreservedly.

There is an old legend of Jerusalem that tells of a woman whose husband was sick unto death, and she went to St. Peter in her sorrow and asked him to prolong her husband's life, and he said,

"I will do it on condition that you will become a beggar." She said, "I do not need to; I have money enough to support us." Peter said, "You must not beg for money, but for time. You go out and beg for time, and any person you find who will give you any time, you can add that to your husband's life." She went out and found one of the ten lepers that Christ had healed, and she asked him for a day of his life, and he said, No, he had lost so much of it that he could not spare any; she found the young man that had been raised by Christ, and she asked him, but he said he knew what it was to be dead once, and he didn't propose to die again until he was obliged to. She put the same question to men and women, asking for a day, or an hour, or a minute of their time to add to her husband's life, and she was coming back disconsolate, when the thought came to her mind, "Why not give your own life?" And she came and asked St. Peter if she might give her own life for the life of her husband. He said she might, and he took from her one-half of her days and gave them to her husband, and they went through this world hand in hand until they came to the river of death, and went across it together.

I have no idea that the old legend is true. And yet it has in it a vein of eternal truth. You may

give your life for others. You may give up your ungodliness, and your worldliness, and your idle, foolish pleasures that amount to so little and will look so insignificant to you when you really come to know higher and holier things—you may give these things up, and center your whole interest, and attention, and all the boundless resources of your love and your fidelity, in winning these lost souls that are dear to you to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mr. B. Fay Mills tells the story of a woman who was married to a man who was not a Christian. He was a prominent banker in the community where he lived, and a very proud man indeed; a man of fifty-five or sixty years of age. This woman came to Mr. Mills one night and she said, "I cannot tell you how troubled I am about my husband. We have been married twenty years, and I never felt like this. I do not do anything but think about my husband and pray for him. I have been pleading with him, and I can do nothing." She went on to say, "Last night I heard him groan, and he said, 'I am so troubled.' I said to him, 'Are you troubled about your soul?' and he said, 'Yes, it is about those things.' I said, 'Will you not kneel down here with me while we settle the question, and give yourself to God?' He said, 'No, I don't want you to speak to me on this

subject again; don't mention the matter again until you have my permission to do so.'" She said, "I cannot live; I cannot live, unless my husband is saved now." Mr. Mills said to her, "Sister, if that is true, he is going to be saved now, you can be assured of that."

That day when the time came for evening service she said to her husband, "Come, dear, and go to meeting with me." He said, "I am not going to meeting. Go if you want to, but I am not going to church. I am not going out of the house unless I come for you after the meeting." She kept on pleading with him, until he finally put down his paper and said, "I will go just this once."

Mr. Mills says that when he saw him coming in, he felt sure the critical day in that man's history had come. It was a stormy night; but they were gathered compactly in a small room, and after a while the leader said, "If any one wants to pray for friends that they may be saved, they may do so, and we will all join in the petition." A man arose and prayed for his brother. Afterward a business man arose and prayed for one of his employees. Now this lady we have been talking of was a member of a church where ladies were not in the habit of taking part in public meetings, and she had never prayed aloud in public in her life;

but she was desperately in earnest about the salvation of her husband, and she kneeled down on her knees beside her proud husband and asked God to save him that night. And when Mr. Mills asked those who wished to become Christians to stand up, his stubborn knees unbent, and he rose up and said, "I want to be a Christian now;" and he went home, and his wife said he prayed at the family altar that night as though he had been a Christian for sixty years. Oh, that God will give us this same earnestness of soul; that will not stop at anything that promises success in winning our friends to Christ!

Dear brothers and sisters, I pray, as I have been praying throughout the day, that God will bless this message to every Christian heart to-night, and that his Holy Spirit will so arouse your souls that there may not be one of you that shall go empty-handed up before the judgment throne at last. I recall a message of a poet, entitled the "Curse of Empty Hands." I trust it may be a message from God to each one of us,—

At dawn the call was heard,
And busy reapers stirred
Along the highway leading to the wheat.
"Wilt reap with us?" they said.
I smiled and shook my head.
"Disturb me not," said I, "my dreams are sweet."

I sat with folded hands
And saw across the lands
The waiting harvest shining on the hills;
I heard the reapers sing
Their song of harvesting,
And thought to go, but dreamed and waited still.

The day at last was done,
And homeward, one by one,
The reapers went, well laden as they passed.
Theirs was no misspent day,
Not long hours dreamed away
In sloth that turns to sting the soul at last.

A reaper lingered near
"What," cried he, "idle here;
"Where are the sheaves your hands have bound to-day?"
"Alas," I made reply,
"I let the day pass by
Until too late to work. I dreamed the hours away."

"O foolish one!" he said,
And sadly shook his head,
"The dreaming soul is in the way of death.
The harvest soon is o'er,
Rouse up and dream no more!
Act, for the summer fadeth like a breath.

"What if the Master came
To-night and called your name,
Asking how many sheaves your hands had made?
If at the Lord's command
You showed your empty hands,
Condemned, your dreaming soul would stand dismayed."

Filled with strange terror then,
Lest chance come not again,
I sought the wheat-fields while the others slept.
"Perhaps ere break of day
The Lord will come this way,"
A voice kept saying, till with fear I wept.

Through all the long, still night,
Among the wheat-fields white,
I reaped and bound the sheaves of yellow grain.
I dared not pause to rest,
Such fear possessed my breast;
So for my dreams I paid the price in pain.

But when the morning broke
And rested reapers woke
My heart leaped up as sunrise kissed the lands.
For came he soon or late,
The Lord of the estate
Would find me bearing not the curse of empty hands.

XVI

THE CRY OF THE FATHER'S HEART FOR HIS SON.

"The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth."—*John* iv. 49.

He is a nobleman, but he is in as great trouble as though he were only a peasant. Neither riches nor titles are able to keep away the ordinary troubles and trials of human life. Money may keep away debt and rags, but it has no power to charm away or even to soothe the dull, cold ear of disease and death. There is an old Spanish proverb which says that there is no home without its "hush!" There is some great trial that the members of nearly every family circle do not like to talk about. There is a "hush!" everywhere. Here is a home where there was only one boy. The parents brought him up with great care. He has gone away, however, and they do not know where he is. They never bolt the door at night in that house, because they are always hoping for and expecting the wanderer, but he never comes and never writes. I know a home where they have

had no trace of the lost son for many years, and an empty place waits for him at the table, with his plate and his chair placed at every meal, but they are always empty. You may talk about what you will in that house, except the subject of the prodigal, and when you get close to that there is a "hush!"—they cannot bear that.

Here is another home where there was once a daughter—a beautiful girl, that a flattering scoundrel came and misled and destroyed. You may talk on every other subject, but you must not touch that, it is the "hush!" of that household.

There is another home—I have been in many of them—where there was only one child. The whole household circle of interest clustered around that one child to make it comfortable and happy; but death, the grim monster who loves the shining mark, came and took him away, and they never think much about the home here, but are always thinking of meeting him in heaven; and when you are with them you are careful not to speak about that sad loss, or cause to vibrate that tender chord; it is the "hush!" of their broken home.

So this home of the nobleman of Capernaum had its "hush!" in it — the poor sick boy that was ready to die. I am sure all our hearts go out to this poor father in his anxiety and care at a time like this.

A soldier writing about the battle of Gettysburg says that the saddest incident of the war which he witnessed was just after that battle. Off on the outskirts, seated on the ground with his back to a tree, they discovered a soldier, dead. His eyeswere riveted on some object held tightly clasped in his hands. As they drew near his side they saw that it was an ambrotype of two small children. And the strong men, who had become hardened through long years of carnage and bloodshed, were broken down at the sight of that man who looked on his children for the last time in this world, who away off in that secluded spot had rested himself against a tree that he might feast his eyes on his little loves; and tears came to eyes that had not wept for months and years. There were six men of them, and great lumps gathered in their throats as they stood there about the dead man, weeping together. The man who relates the story says, "We stood looking at him for a long time. I was thinking of the wife and baby I had left at home, and wondering how soon, in the mercy of God, she would be left a widow, and my baby boy fatherless." They looked at each other and seemed instinctively to understand each other's thoughts. Not a word was spoken, but they dug a grave, and laid the poor fellow to rest with his children's picture clasped over his heart.

Over his grave, on the tree against which he was sitting, they inscribed the words:

"Somebody's Father,
July 3, 1863."

How precious it is to have this illustration in our text to show us so clearly the sympathy of Christ in our affectionate anxiety and care over our loved ones. We can see here just how the Savior feels toward any father or mother that comes to him now in behalf of their children. The Savior listens to them with the greatest possible tenderness. And what a model this noble man was in the directness and simple earnestness of his prayer! Dr. James Hamilton, a great Scotch preacher in his day, tells the story of a Scotchman's wife who besought her husband to pray that the life of their dying baby might be spared. True to his old instincts, the good man kneeled down devoutly, and went out on the well-worn track, as he was wont to do in the prayer meetings in the kirk. Through and through the routine petitions he wandered along helplessly until he reached at last the honored quotation: "Lord, remember thine ancient people, and turn again the captivity of Zion!" The mother's heart could hold its patience no longer. "Eh, mon!" the woman broke forth impetuously, "you are aye

drawn out for the Jews, but it's our bairn that's a-deein'." Then clasping her hands, she cried: "Oh! help us, Lord, and give our darling back to us, if it be thy holy will; but if he is to be taken away from us, make us know thou wilt have him to thyself!" The old Scotch woman had the same spirit of true prayer that the nobleman had, and went directly with her petition to the throne of grace. In both cases they not only asked for what they wanted, but they asked for what they wanted most.

This is a wonderful illustration of the efficacy of the prayers of parents for their children. How often they follow after the wandering ones and bring them back to God when every other good influence seems to have lost its power! Philipp Jakob Spener had a son of eminent talents, but who became extremely perverse and vicious. All means of love and persuasion were without success. The father could only pray, which he continued to do, asking that the Lord might save his son at any time and in any way. The son fell sick; and while lying on his bed in great distress of mind, nearly past the power of speech or motion, he suddenly started up, clasped his hands, and exclaimed: "My father's prayers, like mountains, surround me!" Soon after this his anxiety ceased, a sweet peace spread over his face, his disease reached a

crisis, and he seemed to be saved both in body and soul by his father's prayers. Are there any here to-night who have been the subject of tender, loving prayers of father, or mother, or dear brothers and sisters, but who despite those prayers are going away into the path of sin? For, oh, it is possible for you to resist all the gracious influences of prayers and entreaty, and even the wooing of the Holy Spirit, and go down to death and ruin in spite of them all. For, after all, we must choose God to be our God. The most tender and loving father and mother that ever lived cannot bequeath to us their piety, their goodness, their obedience to God. We must accept him freely, with our own will.

There is no more solemn theme for consideration than this—that the son of the noblest father or the most loving mother that ever lived has the power to deliberately and wickedly sever himself from his father's and his mother's God. An English minister tells the story of a friend of his who was walking along a beautiful valley in North Wales on a bright summer's day. He noticed a sale by auction going on, and drew near to it. It was a small farmer's cottage. In it once lived some old Christian people, who had a godless son. The mother had been long dead, and now the father had passed away. So the son came to bury the

dead, to sell the little property that remained, and to take away the proceeds. By and by they came to the old family-altar. There was the little table by which the old man had so often knelt, the old worn Bible from which he had often read. To touch it with rude hands was sacrilege. "Bring it out," said the son; "there will be no more psalm-singing and Bible-reading here. Sell it." So they sold it amid the shudder of the crowd, and the old, tear-bedewed Book passed into other hands. The same gentleman passed that way a few months later. No one had cared to rest beneath a godless roof, and the place was forsaken and no longer fitted up for a home. Its roofless condition seemed to say to every passer-by that they who forsake God will find themselves God-forsaken. O my dear young friend, God will not force himself upon you. He loves you, he seeks after you with infinite tenderness, in every way he seeks to arouse your love and your gratitude, but it is possible for you to refuse him, to count his love an unholy thing, and be lost at last. Come back to your father's or your mother's God to-night!

How such incidents of Christ's tenderness to those who are in trouble encourage us to bring our troubles, our sorrows, and our sins to him! If you cannot trust Christ, whom can you

trust? Mr. Spurgeon tells the story of a man who came all the way from Holland once to ask him how he might be saved. He was sitting in his study seeing inquirers when this young Hollander came in and spoke in broken English. Mr. Spurgeon asked him where he came from. He said from Flushing, by boat. The fact was, he wanted to know what he must do to be saved. The great preacher said: "Well, it is a long way to come to ask that question. You know that you are to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." The man replied: "But I cannot believe in Jesus Christ." "Well," Mr. Spurgeon said, "now look here. I have believed in him a good many years, and I do trust him; but if you know something or other against him, I should like to know it, for I do not like to be deceived." "No, sir; I do not know anything against him." "Why don't you trust him, then? Could you trust me?" "Yes, I would trust you with anything," said he. "You do not know much about me?" "No, not much; only I know you are a preacher of the Word, and I believe you are honest, and I could trust you." "Do you mean to say," said Mr. Spurgeon, "you could trust me, and then tell me that you cannot trust Jesus Christ: you must have found out something bad about him. Let me know it." He stood still and thought for a moment, and then said: "Dear

me, I can see it now. Why, of course I can trust him—I cannot help trusting him; he is such a blessed one that I must trust him. Good-by, sir," he said, "I will go back to Flushing; it is all right now." Why cannot you just as simply trust the Lord Jesus to-night as your Savior?

It is very interesting to me to notice that in so wonderfully condensed a record of what occurred as we have here, space is taken to tell us that when the man went away from Christ, believing the word of Jesus, and the servants met him on the way home and told him that his son was getting better and was going to live, he immediately inquired of them the hour when he began to mend, and the servants said, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." "So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house." I want to emphasize the fact that it doesn't need to take long to bring about salvation when an earnest, seeking soul meets Christ.

I want to tell you an experience which came to me yesterday afternoon, which is one of the most remarkable illustrations of this fact that I have ever heard or known. I went, in response to a summons through one of the members of this church,

to visit a family who are not members of any church, and though some of them had been to hear me preach, I had no knowledge of them whatever. I was requested to come and administer the ordinance of baptism to a young lady some twenty years old, who is lying very ill with consumption, and perhaps will never leave her room until she leaves it for the grave. She has been shut in there sick for five months, and though none of the rest of the family were Christians, she in some way that I do not now know had found the Lord, and greatly desired to be baptized. I was met at the door by the mother, and ushered into a very pleasant home. I sat for a while by the bedside of the young lady and talked with her and the mother, first about the bright day, about the sunshine coming into the sick-room, and commonplace matters, until incidentally I turned to the mother and asked if she were a Christian. She replied that she was not. Upon further inquiry I found that she had been converted when she was a young girl over in northern Pennsylvania, but for some reason she had not joined the church, and as is usual in cases where people try to live a Christian life outside of the church, she had failed, and now for many years had lived an entirely worldly life. She said she had wholly given up the idea that she would ever be a Christian; that she had re-

marked only the other day to a friend that she was certain if she were to die she would be lost, and that she sometimes thought the day of grace had passed for her. By this time I was thoroughly aroused. It seemed to me such a terrible thing to baptize that sick young lady, who was waiting there for her dying, in the presence of a mother who could not enter into any spiritual fellowship or communion about it; and so, with my heart uplifted to God, I set myself deliberately to win her to Christ then and there. I urged what God says in his book—that he is *married* to the backslider. I set forth as earnestly as I could the seemingly providential opportunity that this consecration of her daughter in baptism to the Lord presented for her to renew her consecration to God. She was so unresponsive at first that, after talking with her ten or fifteen minutes, I was almost ready to give up. How many times we fail that way when we are on the very verge of success! But the thought possessed me that perhaps this was the woman's last call—if I could not win her there beside her daughter's sick-bed, and on the occasion of her child's baptism, nobody could ever win her; and so with new energy I pursued the conversation. The result was that at the close of a half-hour her heart was broken with deep conviction, and, sobbing and crying out to God for mercy, she knelt with me

beside her daughter's bed and gave herself unreservedly up to God, and found forgiveness and peace in the Lord Jesus Christ. She then went out to bring in a bowl of water for the baptism, and called in her sister, who was visiting her from her old home in Pennsylvania, and a younger daughter thirteen years of age. I then baptized the lovely young sick girl, and as the mother went away from the room for a moment, she looked up in my face, and with a radiance from heaven shining in her eyes, she said, "Oh, isn't this glorious! I have been lying here praying for this, night and day, for so many weeks." Then I had a vision, a revelation, and I knew it was in answer to this daughter's prayer that salvation was come to this house.

But the story is not yet complete. I turned around from the bedside to see standing there the aunt, whose face was red with weeping, and I said to her, "Are you a Christian?" And she said "No." And then I entered upon a new conversation. She frankly confessed that she desired to be a Christian and had long desired to be, but there were so many things in the way—idols, she said, that she could never give up. But I began to tell her the story of her sister's conversion before she had come in, and the sister, re-entering the room just then, came up and put

her arms around her neck and kissed her, and they sat and cried together. I turned to the little girl, a beautiful child of thirteen, and I saw by her eyes that the battle was won there before I began. Her heart opened to the Savior as naturally as a flower opens to the sun. Then we had another season of prayer, the aunt and the young girl praying for themselves, and the mother and the sick daughter and myself pleading with God for them, until they came to trust the Lord Jesus Christ. I was an hour and a quarter in that house. I had never been in it before. Though two of them had heard me preach, I had never even known their names. In that hour and a quarter, through God's great grace and mercy, three souls had turned away from sin, and had found peace in trusting the Lord Jesus as their Savior. And the mother, determined not to make the same mistake again, gladly gave me her name with her daughter's to enter as probationers into the membership of the church, and the sister promised to immediately unite with the church on her return home. I take no credit of it whatever to myself; I was only an ambassador who happened to have, by God's providence, the opportunity. Whatever human credit there is belongs to that frail sick girl, who, lying there day by day, had not only given her own heart to the Lord,

but had breathed out her soul to God until salvation had come to her house. Oh, it is easy to come to Christ when your heart is in it. Delay no longer; come to Him, and come to Him now!

XVII

THE HEALING OF THE CRIPPLE AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA.

"After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water; whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked."—*John* v. 1–9.

MATTHEW HENRY, the commentator, one of those big-hearted men who are always bubbling over with love themselves and therefore have an eye for it anywhere else, is filled with ecstasy and delight that when Jesus came up to Jerusalem to the

feast, instead of visiting the palaces and the many interesting and beautiful works of architecture that might be found in the Jerusalem of that day, he went about among the sick and poor, seeking after the most helpless and troubled souls, where he might bring comfort and good cheer to those who needed it most. But that was characteristic of our Savior, and it is characteristic of genuine Christianity everywhere. You may follow the course of Christianity in any country where it has been introduced, and its path may be marked by its mercy toward the sick and the crippled and the unfortunate, by the kindlier treatment of prisoners, by the almshouses and the hospitals that have been erected. In what blessed contrast does Christianity stand out against all its foes in this respect! As one asked long ago, "Did Voltaire ever endow any almshouses? No; he was too mean. Did Tom Paine ever lay the foundation-stone of a hospital? No; he was too selfish. Did Rousseau ever sympathize with sorrow? No; he was too suspicious and frenzied. Did Hume ever relieve poverty? No; he was too miserly. Did Gibbon ever wipe the hot tear from the eye of suffering—did he ever drop a word from his lips, or more eloquent pen, which has proved a balm to pain? No; he was too fickle and revengeful." And if this questioner had lived in our time, he

might have asked whether the Theosophists, like Mrs. Besant, have ever wiped away tears of suffering, fed hungry children, or sought to lift up the fallen. Has anybody ever heard of Robert Ingersoll giving out of his great wealth to build up hospitals? I have never heard of it; but on the other hand he has used his eloquence to drive poor, discouraged, disheartened men to suicide as a relief from their sorrows.

You may depend upon it that where you find great heroism, and brotherly kindness, and loving generosity to the suffering, behind it somewhere there is a Christian heart. It was the spirit of Jesus Christ which made John Howard the messenger of mercy he was in the prisons of Europe. It was the brotherly spirit absorbed from devotion to Jesus Christ which made Wilberforce, and Garrison, and Wendell Phillips the evangelists of human freedom and the mighty forces they were against slavery. It was her tender, loving fellowship with the Savior that made Florence Nightingale the angel of the Crimea. Thank God, wherever it goes, Christianity is sweetening the cup of human sorrow, healing disease—physical and mental and moral—binding up the brokenhearted, establishing and purifying home life, and making the world a better and holier place in which to live.

What a pathetic picture this is which we are studying to-night! Here is the old pool, famous all around the city and the land, no doubt, as a place of healing. There were certain seasons in the year when the waters were troubled, at which time the mineral qualities in it or the medicinal properties were more apparent than at others; and so gracious were the cures that were wrought by bathing in these waters at such seasons that they thought an angel came and troubled the waters. It *was* the angel of God's providential mercy and care, which is always seeking to bless and comfort his children. No doubt some of the people who came were rich and had a retinue of servants to look after them and care for them, and when there was the slightest indication of the troubling of the waters they were able to take immediate advantage of it and went away healed. But those that were poor and friendless and unable to walk, had to lie there and depend upon somebody's charity, waiting for some kind hand to give them help; and often it occurred that before such help came the waters had ceased to be medicinal.

The man we are studying especially is an exceedingly interesting case, and one likely to arouse our sympathy. He had been sick for thirty-eight years. If he had been a young man, say twenty-

two, when he began to be troubled with his disease, he was now sixty years old; and as one grows old fast when sick, he probably had the appearance of being an old man. It does not say that he had been lying here for thirty-eight years, but that he had been here a long time. He had watched many go into the waters crippled and frail and sick, and go away recovered, and this of course had been very discouraging and disheartening to him. His answer to Jesus is just like a sick person who has been discouraged, "I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me."

Now this man—with his long illness, in his helpless condition, the remedy within reach and yet he somehow shut away from it, and others stepping in before him and finding recovery; with his own life wasting away, and he discouraged and settling down to hopelessness—is a fair picture of a man who is sick with sin and who has yielded to his sin until he is no longer master of himself. The ravages of moral disease are not always so open and apparent before the world as in this case. Many a man is entirely destroyed by sin and ready for his overthrow before the world generally knows anything about it. A secret sin works insidiously, but with none the less fatal power. Its hidden

ravages are so terrible that the man comes down at last with a crash that is an astonishment to every one in the community who knows him. Out in the great forests along the Pacific coast, I have often seen a large fungous growth start from the side of a tree. One who was not acquainted with such things would not suspect that there was anything suggestive about it as to the condition of the tree; but an experienced lumberman would at once know that that fungus in some mysterious manner would sap the life-power of the tree in that particular spot. When the fungus falls off in the autumn it leaves scarcely a trace of its presence, the tree being apparently as healthy as before the advent of the parasite; but the whole character of the wood has been changed by the strange power of the fungus, and is now soft and cork-like to the touch. For a while the tree may show no symptoms of decay, but at the first tempest it encounters the huge trunk snaps off at the spot where the fungus has been, and the tree comes crashing down in ruin. How many times is the overthrow of sin like that. The newspapers of every day are full of such cases: Men who look fair enough to the ordinary observer, but the deadly fungus of sin was at work sapping the moral stamina of their nature, until at last the will power of the man was gone, the vitality of

the conscience was destroyed, and he came down in the tempest with a crash that spread shame and ruin everywhere.

What sorrowful meditations this man must have had as he lay there day after day and thought of his nearly forty years of helplessness, of all the broken plans and purposes of his young manhood. But, alas! sin works far more desolate meditations for its victim. Jean Paul Richter paints a picture which has been often quoted, but is full of the clearest revelation of the danger that besets a young life, and also reveals its possibilities for salvation. He tells the story of an old man who stood on New Year's night in the window and looked with deep despair up to the motionless, ever beautiful sky, and around on the still, pure, white earth, whereupon there was no one so perturbed and comfortless as he. For he was near his grave; it was covered by the snow of age, and not by the verdure of youth; and he had brought nothing out of a long, rich life—nothing with him but errors, sins, and misery, a wasted body, a ruined soul, the breast full of poison, and an old age of remorse.

His fair youth-time returned like a vision to him, and took him back to the time when he had stood with his father upon the branching road of life. The right-hand path led into the sunny land of virtue, full of light, good fruits, and angels—a

wide, still country. To the left was the underground path of vice, leading to a black hell, full of dripping poison, writhing serpents, and dark, stifling steam. Oh, how the serpents clung to his breast! Oh, the poison on his tongue! He knew well where he was.

Mindless and in inexpressible agony, he called to heaven: "Oh, give me back my youth again, O father; stand me on the branching path of life again that I may live my life over."

But his father and his youth were gone long ago. He saw fireflies dancing over the swamp, and extinguished in the church-yard, and he said, "They are my foolish days." He saw a star fall from the sky, shining as it fell, and then vanish in the earth. "That is I," said his bleeding heart, and the serpents of remorse made still larger their wounds.

The flickering fantasms drew the somnambulist out on the roof and the windmill raised its arms threateningly as if to dash him to pieces, and as his last hours approached, the spirits of the dead came from their empty tombs.

In the midst of these terrors, suddenly from the tower came the New Year's chimes like distant church music. He was deeply moved, and as he looked around the horizon and over the wide landscape he thought of his youthful friends that now,

better and happier than he, were teachers of the world, the fathers of happy children, and blessings to mankind; and he said: "Oh, could I also on this first night of the year sleep with dry eyes, as once I could! Alas, I should now be happy if I had only followed my parents' teachings, and fulfilled their wishes for me!"

The vision of his lost opportunities came with fearful clearness before him. He could see no more; a thousand hot tears streamed into the hiding snow. He moaned in despair: "O youth, only come back, come back again!"—and it came back; for he had on the New Year's night only been dreaming. He was still a young man; only his errors were not a dream. But he thanked God that while he was still young he could turn from the path of vice into the sunny way of the pure land of virtue. Thank God, I may bring you the same blessed hope of salvation, the same invitation to choose to be made every whit whole to-night.

This poor man who had been so long in his sickness found all that he needed when he found Christ. What new hope must have bounded along his veins and throbbed in his heart when Christ with those tender, strong eyes looked into his and said, "Wilt thou be made whole?" And Jesus sent him away, carrying his bed with him. Jesus of

Nazareth is still passing by. He is still seeking after those who are crippled by sin and sorrow. He is here to-night. He is knocking at the door of your heart as you are thinking to-night about your sins, and how they have enslaved you and held you in bondage, and oftentimes crippled you, so that when you desired to do the good you did the bad. The Savior is here in this message, and he is looking deep down into your heart, and making the same tender and loving inquiry of you, "Wilt thou be made whole?"

Notice some of these words for a moment. "Whole"—that means completely healthy; it means to be free from the bondage of your sins; it means that he will cure this disease of sin in your heart, and give you a new heart which will love the good and despise the evil—a heart which will abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good.

"Be made whole"—put the emphasis on the word "made." You cannot do it yourself. You never can change your own heart. There is no earthly physician skilful enough to accomplish a cure. This deadly disease will destroy you unless you come to Jesus and, yielding yourself up completely in obedience to him, are through his power and love "made whole."

"Thou." How personal that is!—not your

neighbor or your friend; not your wife or husband; not your brother or your sister. They may all be made whole, and yet you die and be lost eternally in your sins. Wilt *thou* be made whole?

"Wilt." Ah, brother, it is right there in your will. "Whosoever will may come." You must make up your mind. You must determine in your very soul. You must make a decision, absolute and conclusive. You must break with everything that stands in the way, and by the honest exercise of your will settle this matter for time and eternity. Brother, sister, I bring you the Savior's message, "Wilt thou be made whole?" If you will obey the Lord Jesus, you may be made every whit whole from this very hour.

XVIII

THE TRAGEDIES AND TRIUMPHS OF THE HUMAN WILL.

"Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." —*John* v. 40.

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." —*John* vii. 17.

We are face to face here with the direct teaching, in harmony with the spirit of the Bible everywhere, that the responsibility for the loss of a man's soul and his failure to attain eternal life must always rest on his own will. The Bible makes this truth very clear, and puts great emphasis on the power of every individual to choose the right or the wrong. It is distinctly stated that it is the desire of our Heavenly Father that all should be saved, and that nothing can shut the door of heaven upon us except our own refusal. Isaiah saw this long ago and said, voicing God's message of entreaty: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing

and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Peter so understood it, for he says: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Ezekiel was also chosen to bring us a message from God's heart: "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?"

The Savior, standing above doomed Jerusalem, voiced the same great truth of man's power to choose his own destiny. With streaming eyes he exclaimed, looking down upon the city he had sought in vain to save, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." And in that last book of the Bible, in the last chapter of it, in its most tender and loving invitation, the same great message speaks to us: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." And then we have

the Scriptures which we are specially studying to-night, in which the Savior at first declares to those that have rejected him, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life;" and says to others with whom he is pleading, as it is brought out more clearly in the Revised Version, "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know."

These Scriptures surely make it very clear to us that our salvation hinges on our own will. There is no bar to our salvation in the universe, except what resides in our own hearts; and God has promised that if we will ask him, he will give us assistance and help, freely and willingly, to stimulate any good purpose. Thus it is that every man and every woman hold the lever in their own hands which controls their eternal destiny. You cannot say that you are in danger because of lack of love on the part of God, because "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." You cannot say that there is any lack of willingness on the part of God to save you, for "he is not willing that any should perish." No, let us be honest with ourselves and with God to-night. If we are not Christians to-night, it is not because we cannot be, but simply and plainly because we will not.

The difference between the Christian and the

unconverted here this evening is that the Christian, in response to the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ for love and obedience, says with gladness: "I will. I surrender my will to thee, O Lord. Gladly will I learn what is pleasing to thee, and loyally will I perform thy will. Not my will, but thy will be done." The Savior stands with equal tenderness and love before every unconverted person here to-night, and asks of each of you the same loyalty, the same glad surrender of yourself in loving service and obedience to him. But however you may disguise it even to yourself, you are really saying to the loving, seeking Savior, who died to redeem you: "I will not. I will not yield myself to thee. I will not confess thee before men. I will not give thee my love and my service." I know that when we have asked you to be Christians you have said, "I cannot," but that is not true. God has made no blunders; the truth is that you will not; it is the rebellion of your heart against God. A warden at Sing Sing Prison once said that it made him tremble to hear a boy say "won't," to his mother; for it seemed to him that that boy had already started on the road to the penitentiary. The spirit of rebellion against rightful government was coming to be master in the boy's mind and heart. O my brother, my sister, you ought to tremble to-night if you are

saying "I won't" to God. One may say that until the conscience loses its power to arouse the will to action.

Victor Hugo says, "A man may be a wreck as a ship. Conscience is an anchor; but it is as terrible as true that, like the anchor, conscience may be dragged." Perhaps some of you are congratulating yourselves that you do not feel so full of anxiety and care about your religious condition as you have at other times. It is not a source of congratulation but rather one for terror and anxiety. Wo to the man who is at peace and at the same time a sinner against God. There is no real peace except in the consciousness of your salvation, and if you are a sinner against God and yet have no sense of regret or remorse or trouble about it, you may be sure that it means danger; that it is only the dangerous lethargy and stupor which precede death, or the stupidity of the drunkard who does not feel pain because his nerves are drugged into insensibility. It is a false peace which will end in bitter remorse, and in the aroused conscience will sting like an adder when it is too late for change.

Southey tells the story of some wreckers who cut down a bell that was suspended on a buoy over a dangerous reef, in order that the incoming ships, unwarned, in the darkness and storm, might come

within the reach of their greedy and thieving hands. The wreckers themselves afterward were lost on that same reef from which they had removed the warning bell. So it is possible to stifle your conscience and drug your will. But it means destruction. For though you reject the Holy Spirit, and trample your conscience under foot, and lock your heart against the pleading knocking of the Son of God, and drown your restlessness of soul in the gaieties of the world, it does not change the fact that you are accountable to God for your action, that you owe him your service and your love, that the wages of sin is death, and that if ye will not come to Christ ye cannot have life.

Every little while we have some great illustration which shows us how true the Bible is to our human nature, and that a man cannot dally with his own conscience, or play with the divine right of choice, without paying the fearful penalty of disaster and ruin. Only a few years ago, Mr. Parnell was the astute and thoroughly trusted leader of the Irish cause in the English Parliament. He had an eloquence peculiar to himself, seemed to have an unlimited measure of common sense, and above all a masterful will, which made him a governor of others, because he first governed himself. Beginning alone, he fought his way step by step, until such men as Gladstone believed in

him, and respected him, and victory seemed certain for him and for his cause. There was a time when almost any man with a clear eye for historic perspective would have said, "Here is a man who will live in history as one of its great figures." In 1882 he was great enough to offer of his own accord to Mr. Gladstone to retire from public life altogether, if in the great Englishman's judgment such an act would be helpful to the Irish cause.

Then came his secret overthrow. The sin which destroyed Samson undermined him. It was long covered up and hidden; but like all sin, as it grew into mastery and control of the man's nature, it became bold and defiant. In the autumn of 1890 his shame was uncovered before all the world. Then he was asked to retire; he was shown his cause would certainly fail unless he relieved it of his burden. But his sin seemed to have changed his whole nature, and he no longer had the power to be self-denying, or to do great and generous deeds. Justin McCarthy, who had been his dearest friend, says: "He seems suddenly to have changed his whole nature and his very ways of speech. We knew him before as a man of superb self-restraint, cool, calculating, never carried from the moorings of his keen intellect by any waves of passion around him—a man with the eye and the foresight of a born commander-in-chief." That

was the man before he had sold himself to the devil, before secret sin had eaten out his manhood and drugged his conscience and palsied his will; but what kind of a man was he afterward? Hear McCarthy again: "We had now in our midst a man seemingly incapable of self-control; a man ready at any moment, and on the smallest provocation, to break into a very tempest and whirlwind of passion; a man of the most reckless and self-contradictory statement; a man who could descend to the most trivial and vulgar personalities, who could encourage and even indulge in the most ignoble and humiliating brawls." You all know the result. As Lucifer fell like a star from heaven to the deepest hell, so he fell from leadership, from the respect of mankind, and died as Samson did, broken-hearted and in shame. O my brother, my sister, do not dally with sin, do not dally with your will which is strong enough yet to accept the Lord Jesus Christ! It is an awful thing for Christ to have to say about you in heaven to-night, where he is at the right hand of God, making intercession for you, "He will not," or "She will not," come unto me that they might have life.

But, thank God, if you will you may. What a blessed Scripture this second one is, "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know." Notice the order: first, it is to will. You must make up

your mind. You must formulate the purpose in your heart. It must be a decision, absolute. That is the first step. The next is doing. "He that willeth to do his will"—there must be action. That brings knowledge. That brings light and experience. It is as if a man had a check book in his hands, and knew there was an abundance in the bank to supply all his needs, and yet he is starving in poverty. He must first will that he will draw on that bank, then he must write his check and present it, and then he shall have coin in his hands and have food in his house.

Mark Guy Pearse tells an interesting story of a poor old woman in Scotland, whose son had come over here to America and was doing well. He wrote home to the widowed mother to tell her that now she need not trouble any more; that as long as she lived, he would send her money for her rent. She was overjoyed, and carefully put his letters in an old broken teapot on the dresser; and almost every night she took them out and read them with eyes filled with tears of joy. But day after day the time drew nearer for the payment of the rent, and sweet as the words of her son were, still it took more than pleasant words to satisfy the landlord. At first she was angry with herself for the fears that whispered within her. Her son had promised and promised again in every letter

he wrote. But what of the promises if the money did not come? At last the rent day came. Surely the postman to-day would bring the money. It was just like her son to calculate so exactly, and to send it just when it was due. No! the postman went his way, and there was nothing for her. The dear old soul tried to keep up; there was some delay somewhere, but it was all right, to-morrow would explain it all, and the landlord could wait till to-morrow. But alas! many to-morrows went by. And at last the landlord could wait no longer. The money must be paid, or she must go.

Once more she put on her spectacles and went through the letters. There it was as plain as plain could be. What could it mean? Oh, if he only knew that to-morrow her little all would be sold for rent!

Now it chanced that a friend, hearing of her trouble, came in to see her.

"I thought your son promised to pay the rent?" said the friend.

"He did!" said the old lady, shaking her head very mournfully, "he did; and I can't think why he isn't as good as his word."

"Will you let me see the letters?" said the friend.

"Yes," said the old woman, and she took down

the broken teapot from the dresser and fetched them out.

The friend read them through. "Was there nothing in this letter?"

"Yes," said the old woman, "there was a strip of paper; some advertisement or something, but no money."

"Where is it?" urged the friend. There it was in the depths of the teapot. "Why, it is a post-office order!" said the friend; "more than enough to pay the rent."

Away they went to the post-office. There was some difficulty at first. The time had passed, but after a while the matter was explained. The order was cashed; and the poor old soul's troubles were at an end.

So, my dear friends, all these precious promises in God's Word are useless to you unless you use them as checks on a bank, or as the post-office order on the treasury. Take that blessed promise, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," great enough and splendid enough to save every poor sinner in the world, but yet it will never save you unless you come to the Lord Jesus Christ. God help you to come to-night! Then you will be able to sing Dr. Bonar's precious old hymn with a new consciousness of ownership:—

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Come unto me and rest;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
Thy head upon my breast!"
I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in him a resting-place,
And he hath made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Behold, I freely give
The living water; thirsty one,
Stoop down, and drink, and live!"
I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"I am this dark world's Light;
Look unto me, thy morn shall rise,
And all thy day be bright!"
I looked to Jesus, and I found
In him my Star, my Sun;
And in that light of life I'll walk
Till all my journey's done.

XIX

THE COMPASSION OF JESUS.

"When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"—*John* vi. 5.

David says in one of his psalms that it was the gentleness of God that made him great. It is the compassion of Jesus that has charmed the heart of mankind. The multitude that had followed him into the desert were inspired by many and differing motives. Many of them were only curiosity seekers, running in the wake, then as now, of every new thing; some of them full of aches and pains and hoping to be cured; some longing for the Messiah, no doubt, and wondering if this were he. But all of them were weary and tired and ready to faint from the long fasting. Their suffering aroused in the heart of Jesus tender compassion and sympathy. For the Savior had sympathy not only for the worthy but for the unworthy as well. Many of our standards of sympathy and charity in these days are, I fear, only polished and refined heathenism. We are ready to sympathize with and give a helping hand to

those who have been able to so retain their uprightness of character that we count them worthy. Yet, after all, the unworthy are also our brothers and sisters; they, too, need our sympathy and compassion. If Jesus had not had compassion on us when we were unworthy, what hope would there have been of our salvation? As in David's case, was it not so in ours, that the gentleness and compassion of the Savior in our unworthiness was what changed us and made it possible for us to be saved? There is constant necessity that we shall put the emphasis on this characteristic of our Savior, and our own consequent duty as the representatives of Jesus Christ in the world. I think especially at this very time in the city of Brooklyn we need to be aroused to fellowship with Jesus Christ in compassion for those who are weary and discouraged and ready to faint.

I confess that I have hesitated about speaking the words that have been in my mind and heart in regard to the strife at present agitating the city because of the street-car strike. I have hesitated because it is so hard to speak without being misunderstood. And yet I dare not, as a Christian minister, keep silent at a time like this. Let me say that, of course, I have absolutely nothing but rebuke for riotous proceedings. There is no safety for rich or poor except in law and order in the

community. That we must have. It is the sworn duty of the public officials to see that law is enforced and that protection is granted to the life and property of all the people.

Now, after having said that, I want very clearly to say that my sympathies as a Christian man and a Christian minister are most distinctly with the strikers. I do not think that they have been justly treated, and I believe that if Jesus Christ were here on earth, his sympathetic presence and loving counsel would be with these five thousand or more men and perhaps twenty thousand women and children whom they represent. I also believe that if the public officials whose duty it is to enforce the law, and who are now calling out the militia in order to do so, had been as careful to make the street-car companies obey the law, it is quite probable the strike would not have occurred. I have been unable to find it denied by any responsible parties that the schedules for trips were so arranged by the street-car officials that employees were compelled, in order to earn the scanty wages granted them, to break the law which requires the trolley cars not to run faster than ten miles an hour. Instead, they have been obliged to make fifteen or twenty miles an hour on a good part of their route. If they have refused to do this, they have been discharged. If they did do it, and accident re-

sulted, they have also been discharged. They have been held in a grip equal to that old hard-shell theology by which men were damned if they did, and damned if they didn't. The result of this lawlessness on the part of the street-car companies has at least contributed to a hundred brutal murders and the maiming of hundreds of other unfortunate citizens. This state of facts cannot be overlooked when we are considering the position which Christian people ought to take in regard to the issue between the companies and their employees.

It does not appear to my mind that the management of the street-car companies have regarded their men from the standpoint of their humanity. They have dealt with them, seemingly, as they would with so many horses, or so many cars—to be had and used at the lowest price, and under such conditions as brought in money, without regard to the result upon the men. John Ruskin has never been regarded as a fanatic on social questions, and this is what he says about the duties of employers of labor: "Five great intellectual professions exist in every civilized nation. The soldier's profession is to defend it; the pastor's, to teach it; the physician's, to keep it in health; the lawyer's, to enforce justice in it; the merchant's, to provide for it. And the duty of

all these men is, on due occasion, to die for it. On due occasion; that is, the soldier, rather than leave his post in battle; the physician, rather than leave his post in plague; the pastor, rather than teach falsehood; the lawyer, rather than countenance injustice. Supposing the captain of a frigate saw it right, or were by any chance obliged to place his own son in the position of a common sailor,—as he would then treat his son, he is bound always to treat every one of the men under him. So, also, supposing the master and owner of a manufactory saw it right, or were by any chance obliged to place his own son in the position of an ordinary workmen,—as he would then treat his son, he is bound always to treat every one of his men. And, as the captain of a ship is bound to be the last man to leave his vessel in case of wreck, and to share his last crust with the sailors in case of famine, so the manufacturer, in any commercial crisis or distress, is bound to take the suffering of it with his men, and even to take more of it for himself than he allows his men to feel,—as a father would, in a famine, shipwreck, or battle, sacrifice himself for his son."

Does anybody believe that if such a spirit had been shown by the management in this case, this strike would ever have transpired?

The result, whatever it may be, will undoubted-

ly have this characteristic: that in these cold winter days and nights added hundreds and possibly thousands of people will be suffering for bread to eat, for raiment to put on, and for a sheltering roof over their heads. It is a time for Christian men and women to recall the attitude of the Lord Jesus Christ toward the poor and the suffering and the unfortunate; and to remember that if anybody was found of him who was blind, or deaf, or leprous, or in trouble of any kind, outcast or in disgrace, they were the very ones to whom he gave his thought and attention, about whom he was anxious and solicitous, with whom he was patient and long-suffering. My dear friends, it is a time for Brooklyn Christianity to be like that of Jesus. It is a time to share with the poor and the destitute. It is a time to divide your loaf and comfort with those who need bread and coal. It is a time to stand against oppression of the poor and to give your sympathy and your counsel to those who are scattered abroad like sheep without a shepherd and are ready to faint by the wayside. It is a time for us to study deeply and try to find out what the Master would do if he were here; and having found that, raise no more questions, but proceed to do it. It is a time when your prayers need to be punctuated by sympathetic actions and loving deeds of brotherly fellowship.

Alas! that there should be such great gulfs between the conditions of our Heavenly Father's children. If we could only put ourselves in our brother's place what a different city we could make of it!

Mrs. Ballington Booth tells the story of a little child, a boy scarcely more than four or five years old, who was found by the Slum Sisters of the Salvation Army in New York city. His parents had drifted away, they knew not where. When found, this little fellow was crouched in the corner of a hallway, one cold night in March. He was but half-clad and was numbed with exposure to the cold. Taken into the barracks, the waif was washed and dressed in clean clothes, warmed and fed. He was delighted with the attention that he received, and particularly with his garments; so much so that when one of the Sisters attempted to undress him for bed, he cried, under the belief that he was about to be permanently deprived of his new apparel. This was very apparent when the Sister attempted to teach him the words of the simple prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep."

Kneeling beside him at the bedside, the Sister said: "Say these words after me: 'Now I lay me down to sleep.'"

Peeping between his fingers, the little fellow lisped, "Now I lay me down to sleep."

"I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep," continued the Sister.

"I pray thee, Lord, my clothes to keep," whispered the boy.

"No, not 'clothes to keep,'—'soul to keep,'" corrected the Sister.

"Soul to keep," said the boy.

"Now say it from the beginning," urged the young woman; "'Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep.'"

But the poor little fellow was too intent upon his treasures. "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray thee Lord, my clothes to keep," came from the little cot, making the same mistake as before.

"No, no; that is not right," spoke the painstaking Sister. "You should pray God to care for your soul, not your clothes. I'll take care of those."

"And won't you pawn them," replied the lad, to the astonishment of the Sister; "and buy rum with them? That is what they always did at home when I had new clothes."

Poor little fellow! He had never had anything nice in his life that it had not been a precursor of disappointment and sorrow. Beaten about from pillar to post by drunken parents, starved and impoverished in every way, how little chance he had to have any proper conception of God's care

and love! How it ought to shame every Christian that we permit city governments to go on protecting this humanity-destroying liquor traffic in its lawlessness, and protecting greedy, law-defying corporations in their lawlessness, while poor, defenseless women and children pay the penalty in sorrow and tears.

But the Lord Jesus has not only compassion for the body—he had compassion also for the soul; not only bread for man's physical need, but bread for his spiritual need. The world has no satisfying food for the soul. It has many things that may interest the intellect, that may give pleasure for a while to the nerves of sensation; but if there be no bread from heaven, the soul is unfed and slowly starved to death.

There is an interesting story which comes to us from the early exploration of Australia. In the central deserts of that island, there grows a strange plant called the nardoo, bearing leaves like clover. The early English travelers, Burke and Wills, while prosecuting their explorations into the heart of this immense region, followed the example of the natives when their food gave out, and began to eat the roots and leaves of this plant. It seemed to satisfy them; it filled them at first with a sense of comfort and repletion. But, nevertheless, they grew weaker and more emaciated every day.

They were not hungry, for the plant seemed to satisfy their cravings for food; yet all the effects of an unfilled hunger began to appear in them—their flesh wasted from their bones, their strength disappeared until they scarcely had the energy of an infant; they could not crawl on their journey more than a mile or two a day. At last one of them perished of starvation and the other was rescued in the last extremity. On analysis, it was discovered that the bread made of this plant lacked an element essential to the sustenance of a European; and so, even though they seemed fed, they were not nourished, and were constantly starving.

What a striking illustration this is of the fatal results that come from trying to feed one's spiritual nature on material things! Neither riches, nor fame, nor pleasure, nor any other earthly food, can give peace to the conscience nor rest to the aspiring soul. Only sympathy and forgiveness and communion which come from loving fellowship with Christ can properly nourish our spiritual nature, sustain us and prepare us to fulfil the high destiny to which God is calling us.

How tender is the compassion of Jesus to the poor sinner! I read this morning for our Scripture lesson that wonderful story of the woman who came into the house of Simon when Jesus was at dinner, risking everything that she might show

her love for Christ. What a picture it is! You see the woman there, down on the floor, sobbing and weeping at the feet of the Lord Jesus. Simon is indignant. No doubt all the guests are indignant and astonished. But Jesus—who has been looking down in great tenderness and compassion on this poor woman, and saying to her in words that are sweeter than the honey from the honeycomb to her poor wounded heart, "Thy sins are forgiven thee"—looks around at Simon and says, "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which o them will love him most?" Poor Simon! He was in a hard box then. He no doubt saw the drift of the conversation, but he was compelled to answer, "I suppose that one to whom he forgave most." And Jesus replies in a way that must have filled this poor woman's heart with much comfort, "Thou hast rightly judged." Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my

feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins are forgiven; for she loved much."

O brother, sister, if you will come to him in penitence and faith, you will find that he is still the same loving and compassionate Savior.

The stories of marvelous conversions told in the Bible are no greater illustrations of Christ's tender compassion and willingness to save than are constantly occurring now. When Mr. B. Fay Mills was holding revival meetings in the city of Cleveland, this incident occurred:

There lived in a neighboring State a lawyer of distinguished ability. He had always been esteemed a man of sterling worth, supposed to be honorable, and strictly moral. He had been, however, a disbeliever and an infidel of the Ingersoll type. The last five years had been a time of unusual anxiety to this man because of a suit in which he had been engaged involving the ownership of a tract of land worth about fifty thousand dollars. The suit had been tried several times, and had now been carried up to the Supreme Court of the State. The lawyer had invariably won his case—but by fraud. The principal witness on the winning side had been a man whose testimony had been bought for the price of two thousand dollars. Of this,

seven hundred dollars was paid down before the last trial of the case; but, smitten by remorse, this miserable perjurer, when he had spent two hundred dollars of his price, brought back five hundred dollars to the lawyer and—gambler though he was—declared that he would not and could not use it. Shortly after this he died. Undeterred by this event, the lawyer made his plans for the further prosecution of the suit, the successful conclusion of which was to bring him the snug fee of twelve thousand dollars, already secured by mortgages on valuable property.

On a matter of business he came to Cleveland, and one Sunday was registered in a prominent hotel. Observing the general interest in the meetings going on at Music Hall, and purely from curiosity, he decided to go there. Sunday evening found him in the immense audience, listening to Mr. Mills as he preached from the text: "And we came to Kadesh-Barnea." As the preacher proceeded, describing in simple but impressive language the magnitude of the crisis to which the children of Israel had come, with the land of promise before them, to enter if they would, and with years of wandering in the wilderness as the retribution for their stubborn faithlessness, the sharp, irresistible conviction was borne upon this man's soul that his Kadesh-Barnea, the unlooked-

for but inevitable and awful crisis of his life, was confronting him. All the sophistries of his disbelief shriveled away in the strong light of truth. He saw what was involved in the forsaking of his sins—the utter sweeping away of false reputation and stolen wealth, with perhaps heavy punishment for his crimes.

All night long he faced the crisis. He went to the meeting at noon on Monday, irresistibly drawn to hear what might be said there. Among the company at the noon meeting was Mr. E. F. Mattison, a man well known in Cleveland business circles. This Christian man, as the company was dispersing, saw the haggard face of this stranger tarrying behind, and went to him. A few words revealed the spiritual emergency, and for an hour the two talked and prayed, the agony for the man's soul breaking forth in earnest entreaty. Rising from his knees, the man confided to his new-found friend the whole sad story of his misdeed, and his awful dread lest he had sinned beyond redemption. He was bidden to make a complete confession and full restitution, though it might leave him penniless. The mercy and compassion of the Lord Jesus was explained to him, and he was encouraged to believe that even he might be saved.

At the close of the afternoon service, several

clergymen and a prominent lawyer were called into consultation. Long and earnest was the talk, and fervent the prayer; and, before it ended, light came to the penitent man, and the glad consciousness of Divine forgiveness.

This man was at the evening service. The light of pardon was in his steady eyes, and his voice was clear and firm as he declared his full, glad assurance of God's favor, and his purpose to go straight home and give up all he had to undo the evil he had done. Tuesday morning found him on his way with clear purpose to meet the utmost consequence of his guilt. "My wife will be so happy," he said. "She is a Christian woman, and, however poor we may be, we shall be glad."

That is a chapter from the acts of the modern apostles of the nineteenth century. And I claim that it, and many other chapters which I could give you out of my own personal observation and experience, are as wonderful as anything that is recorded in the New Testament. I preach to you this tender, compassionate Savior. He is waiting to be as gracious to you as he ever has been to any repenting, believing soul, in the history of the race.

XX
CHRIST IN THE STORM.

"It is I; be not afraid."—*John* vi. 20.

It is impossible not to let our hearts go out in sympathy with these storm-tossed men who are contending with contrary winds, and worn out with rowing, in the darkness of the night. It is a stormy world, and who of us does not know what it means to row against the wind in the night of trial? Blessed be God that many of us also know what it is to have Jesus come with stately stride across the raging billows and say in our frightened ears, "It is I; be not afraid."

It is a world where storms of trouble and sorrow come upon every life. Even those most completely protected and hedged about by wealth or strength or friends cannot hope to escape.

A Detroit newspaper tells the story of an auction in one of the stores in that city. A pale, sad-faced woman, in a faded gown, stood in the crowd. The loud-voiced auctioneer finally came to a lot of plain and somewhat worn furniture. It had belonged to the pale woman and was being sold to satisfy the mortgage on it. One by one the articles were

sold—the old bureau to one, the easy rocker to another, and the bedstead to a third. Finally the auctioneer hauled out a child's high-chair. It was old and rickety, and as the auctioneer held it up everybody laughed — everybody except the pale-faced woman. A tear trickled down her cheek. The auctioneer saw it, and somehow a lump seemed to come up in his throat, and his gruff voice grew soft. He remembered a little high-chair at home, and how it had once filled his life with sunshine. It was empty now. The baby laugh, the two little hands that were once held out to greet "papa" from that high-chair, were gone forever. He saw the pale-faced woman's piteous look, and knew what it meant—knew that in her eye the little rickety high-chair was more precious than if it had been made of gold and studded with diamonds. In imagination he could see the little dimpled cherub which it once held, could see the chubby little fist grasping the tin rattle-box and pounding the chair full of nicks; could see the little feet which had rubbed the paint off the legs; could hear the crowing and laughing in glee; and now—the little high-chair was empty. He knew there was an aching void in the pale-faced woman's heart: there was in his own.

Many of you know what it is. The days may come and go, but you never get over it. There

is no one to dress in the morning; no one to put to bed at night. The little playthings mock you and break your heart as you lay them away.

"Don't laugh," said the auctioneer softly, as somebody facetiously offered ten cents; "many of you have little empty high-chairs at home which money would not tempt you to part with." Then he handed the clerk some money out of his own pocket and remarked, "Sold to the lady over there." And as the pale-faced woman walked out with the little high-chair clasped in her arms, and tears streaming down her cheeks, the crowd stood back respectfully, and there wasn't anybody that felt like laughing. That poor woman was on the billows, rowing against the wind in the night.

All of you some time will know what a midnight storm means—when the clouds are black as death; when the wind seems some cruel, revengeful demon; when the iron enters into your soul. O my dear friends, it is into such dark storms that Jesus comes and says, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid."

No one knows how to come to our poor hearts when they are broken down by sorrow and temptations, when the good cheer and the courage has gone out of them and there seems to be no music of hope left, and set them right like Jesus. He knows how to do it, because he came and took the

storm on himself, and endured it for us, and was tempted in all points like as we are. There is a legend that there once stood in an old baronial castle a musical instrument upon which nobody could play. It was complicated in its mechanism, and during years of disuse the dust had gathered and clogged it, while dampness and variations of temperature had robbed the strings of their tone. Various experts had tried to repair it, but without success. But there came one day to the castle a man of another sort. He was the maker of the instrument. He saw at once what was wrong and knew how to repair it. With loving care and skill he brought the jangling strings into tune, and then the hall rang with bursts of exquisite music. So the Lord Jesus knows how to come to our hearts when they are full of strife and discord, and by his loving skill and care to bring about harmony and peace and courage.

The disciples did not know that Jesus was watching them that night, and that he was near by to give them help in their sore need. Oh, how tenderly Jesus seeks us out in a storm!

The *Chicago Inter Ocean* tells an incident which occurred in a hospital in that city: Upon a pillow lay a fair young face, pale and drawn. The large, dark eyes, luminous in their gaze, looked out wistfully, appealingly, into space. The

fevered lips, parched and dry, shaped incoherent words. The restless fingers seized the covers with a convulsive grasp, while shudders shook the wasted frame.

"She has congestion of the brain," said the hospital nurse. "She was found unconscious on the street and was brought here. There was nothing about her to tell who she was or where she lived. She cannot last long. Sad, isn't it?"

Just then two ladies approached with a basket of flowers. One was a member of the flower mission, the other was the giver of that especial basket. She had brought it with her from her country home, and now accompanied her friend to see the flowers distributed. They took out a bunch to lay on the little hospital bed.

"She is too far gone," said the nurse, "to notice them."

However, the lady reached over the sufferer, and gently laid a cluster of sweet-scented honeysuckles on the pillow. Slowly the seemingly dying girl opened her eyes with a questioning gaze. Her hands relaxed and rested on her bosom. For the first time in many hours she breathed quietly. A great peace seemed to steal over her. Her lips moved, and she murmured in low tones: "See—mother—it is blooming full—the honeysuckle—that I—planted—by the—garden wall! I am—so

tired, mother—I cannot pick—the blossoms now!"

Starting at the voice and words, the older lady bent hurriedly over the little bed with an exclamation of wondering astonishment, while the tears fell fast over the young head pillowed there. "O Margaret, my daughter! Have I found you at last? O Margaret, speak to me—to your mother—once more!"

The prayer was answered, and the great mother-love wrought anew its miracle of healing, and in time brought back the wanderer to life and home.

Three years before, this young girl had come to the city. She had taken a position in a large store, where the wages were scanty, and where temptation finally wrought ruin. Deceived and broken-hearted, she concealed herself from friends, and would have filled an unknown grave but for the loving ministration of these friends of Jesus who sought to comfort his sick poor.

O my friends, the honeysuckle with its sweet fragrance which lured that young life from death is only a faint type of the tenderness of the blessed Christ, who inspired its gift, and who this night is seeking after you in the darkness and the storm, that he may bring you hope and good cheer!

Christ comes to us when we are beset by the cruel waves of sin, and in danger of everlasting

shipwreck. He comes, no matter how dark the night of despair, and when we are beyond all power of human help.

One who spent last summer in the forests around Lake Superior relates that he was one day passing along the side of a ridge which descended to a shallow channel, beyond which was a low, narrow thicket, and beyond that a deep lake. Suddenly he heard the noise of a deer in full flight. She was coming down the hill in magnificent bounds, clearing forty to fifty feet at a leap, and behind her the "yip-yip" of wolves. At first he apprehended no danger for her, as a few more leaps would give her deep water, and no wolf could catch her at that speed, any way. But the wolf pack had divided and laid an ambuscade for her in the thicket, and as she reached its edge they sprang at her. The pursuing pack closed in, and, quick as thought, she was encircled. Right up into the air she bounded—and into the air bounded every wolf but one; this one rushed in level and fastened upon her flank when she came down. She dragged him, but the other wolves went into the air again on every side to meet her should she try to overleap them. Then the pitiful cries of the deer, and the savage yells and snarls and snapping jaws of the wolves, were such as to bring paleness to the face and palpitation to the heart of the man who was

compelled to witness the scene while helpless to give defense. For him to have rushed in, unarmed as he was, among the enraged brutes would have sealed his own fate.

The picture of that poor deer beset by the wolves is not an exaggerated illustration of many a soul that is pursued by besetting sins and is ambuscaded by passion and lust. I have seen many and many a man trying to escape his sins, making a brave fight against them with all the power that was in him, only to be dragged down again and again. And then I have seen the Lord Jesus Christ come to that man, at the sound of his cry for help and mercy, and dispel the whole pack of lusts and sins, and lead forth the man, redeemed and grateful, in sweet and glorious freedom.

One morning in Denver a noted gambler was present in one of the churches at the morning sermon. During the discourse the pastor, though not aware of the presence of such a character in the congregation, uttered this sentence, "Oh, that men would realize the mighty power of God to save men even when deep in sin; how he can make the drunkard sober, the licentious man chaste, the liar truthful, the swindler righteous, and the gambler honest and upright." God sent these words like an arrow straight home to that gambler's soul. No sooner had the sentence been uttered

than the heretofore hardened man bent his head on the seat in front of him and was found at the close of the service in this attitude, weeping convulsively. To the pastor, who inquired the occasion of his mental anguish, he replied: "If all that you said this morning is true, then even I may be saved. But can it be true? Can it be true?" The precious promises of God's Word were quoted to him, his spirit became calm and trustful, and there and then he entered into the joy of sins forgiven.

Jesus is still coming to men in the midst of midnight storms of sin and trial. He ever liveth to make intercession for us, and in the darkest hours he comes to us and knocks at the door of our hearts.

Dr. George F. Pentecost tells the story of a poor ragged little Scotch girl who came to him one night in Aberdeen, after nearly all the other people had gone out from the service, and followed him about as he was leaving the hall. Finally he asked her what she wanted. He fully expected that she was a little beggar; and so she was, but it was the bread of life she was after.

"Lassie," he said, "what do you want?"

The little girl reached up on her tiptoes as he bent down, and whispered into his ear:

"I want to get saved."

He was surprised and startled at the intensity of her whispered words, and drew back and looked her eagerly in the face, and repeated her own words for answer:

"You want to get saved?"

"Ay, sir, I do," ever so pathetically, and still in a whisper.

"And why do you want to get saved?"

Again on her tiptoes she reached up and whispered in his ear: "Because I am a sinner."

This was so satisfactory a reason, and by this time the child had so interested him, that he drew her to one side, away from the gentlemen who were standing by, that he might talk with her unreservedly.

"How do you know you are a sinner? Who told you so?"

"Because God says so in the book; and I feel it right here," and she laid her little hand on her breast, as the publican did when he said, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

"Well," said Dr. Pentecost, "do you think I can save you?"

Up to this time she had spoken in whispers; but now, drawing away from him, her eyes taking fire, her words rang out short and clear: "No, no, man; you cannot save me. No man can save a sinner."

By this time his interest was greatly deepened, and he drew her down beside him on one of the benches, and taking her little hands in his, and speaking as kindly as he knew how, he said to her:

"You are quite right; no man can save you, much less I. Tell me why, then, did you come to me? I cannot save you. Who, then, can save you?"

Again she dropped into a whisper, and almost touched his ear with her lips. There was an infinite pathos in her voice as she said: "Jesus can save me."

"Yes, you are quite right. Jesus can save you. But tell me how can he save you? What has he done to save you?"

Again the lips to his ear, and again the eager whisper—if possible more pathetic and tender: "Oh, sir, he died for me."

Out of curiosity to know how the little waif, who had so hotly repudiated the idea of man's ability to save, would answer, Dr. Pentecost replied: "Then he is dead, is he? How can he save you if he is dead?"

The little thing sprang up from her seat, and her eyes, only a moment before suffused with tears, flashed upon him. No whisper now, no timid putting of lips to his ear, but her voice rang out as once before: "He is not dead. He is not dead!"

"But you just now said that he died for you. If he died for you he must be dead. How can a dead man save you, however good and loving he may have been?"

She looked at him as in amazement, and lifting her little lean bare arm in striking gesture she replied again: "Man, Jesus is not dead. He died for me, but he is not a dead man. He is God's Son. Man, did you not tell us this very night that God raised him from the dead? He was dead, but he is not dead now. Oh, man, I want to get saved!" and her voice dropped into the old pathetic tones. "Do not fash me, but tell me all about it, and how I can get saved."

He had preached that night from the text, "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." And this little waif had been drinking it in. He did tell her all about it, and she went away glad and thankful, and full of the consciousness that her sins were forgiven by the Savior who was alive forevermore.

I preach the same ever-living, ever-loving Christ to you to-night.

XXI

JESUS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."—*John* viii. 12.

Some Bible scholars who have given much study to this Scripture think that it was uttered at the close of the day during the feast of tabernacles, when there was the ceremony of the lighting of the lamps. Four great golden candlesticks, each having four golden bowls, were fixed to the temple wall in the court of the women; and as the twilight faded and the darkness shut down about them, with beautiful song and ritual, these lamps were lighted. Forth into the darkness gathering around the temple and shutting out of sight the tents of the people gathered from the country during the feast, shot the steady rays of soft light issuing from these splendid golden lamps. These lamps were typical, and carried the thought of the people back to the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night which led the Israelites in the wilderness.

It was on an occasion like this, they say, when

Jesus was teaching in this court, that, when suddenly the lights flamed forth, he turned all eyes upon himself and sought to give spiritual instruction by pointing to the temple lights and exclaiming, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Other Bible students think that these words were spoken in the early morning—that at daybreak Jesus was in the midst of the people gathering to the early worship. And the first words of this chapter, if we take it to be a connected account in regular order, would indicate that; for it says, "And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down and taught them."

The dawning of the morning in that wonderful temple must have been a sight never to be forgotten. The eyes of the people gazed as, without wave or sound, but with increasing vigor and unsullied purity, the light streamed in from the east. It disclosed the green fields and well-kept vineyards and pleasant groves of the valleys; it lit up the city, its magnificent palaces and its gorgeous temple; it revealed all around them the majestic forms of the mountains. The first beams of the sunlight gilded everything, beautified the pinnacles of the temple, and touched the hills with

gold. And as the people watched the splendid sunrise, the Lord Jesus there in the midst of them said, "This is the emblem of my mission: I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Christianity is a religion of light. It has no fellowship with the owls and the bats that hide in darkness. Free press, free schools, free science, free speech, the light of the intellect, the light of the heart, the light of sympathy and love, all follow in the wake of Jesus Christ.

Isaiah in his day, looking down through the centuries, saw that this was to be true. He says about the coming Savior: "I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. . . . And I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; . . . I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." Malachi saw that day, and exclaimed: "But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." Again Isaiah, looking

forward to the progress of Christianity in the world, saw the time coming when "the sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory."

The New Testament is studded, as it were, with great lamps that tell about the beauty and the glory of Christianity. John says, "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." And Paul says, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And the Lord Jesus says, "Ye are the light of the world," showing that we are to shine in his stead and with his light. But Christ is the great central light of Christianity and of the world. As the moon and the stars get their light from the sun, so we must get our light from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us notice that this is a guiding light. It is to guide us along our path to the Savior, to guide us in the midst of the sorrows and trials of human life. "He that followeth me," says Christ, "shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." It is a light to bring us to the

Savior. It is not the light that saves us. It is not in the power of light to save. But the light shining upon our path makes it possible for us to find our way to the cross, and thus find salvation. As John says in his epistle, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Christ comes to us first as a light, and afterward as a Savior. He is "the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

But how useless the light is if a man will not walk in it! Many people are lost in spite of the light—choosing darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. How many here this evening have for many years had light enough to be saved from sin! The light of Christian civilization has been shining about you since your childhood; the light of the Bible, and of the Sunday-school, and of Christian song, and of the pulpit, and of the experience and example of Christian friends, has illumined your path—the reflected light shining from the face of Jesus Christ. At any time for years, if you had died in your sins, you could not have excused yourself by saying, "I lived up to the best light I had." That is all God requires of us—to live up to the best light we have. But is it not true that for a long time you have

had light enough to show you to the mercy-seat, and you have refused it? We must not only have the light, but we must walk in the light—press forward with all our will and purpose in the path of obedience. If we walk in the light with a determination to obey the Lord Jesus Christ and accept him as our Savior, it will lead us to the cross, where we may find cleansing from all our sin. Neither the light shining on us, nor anything that we are able to do of our own selves as a matter of works, can forgive our sins or cleanse our hearts; but if we follow the light, walk in the light, obeying the Lord Jesus, then "the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

Sin is a desperate and tenacious thing. You cannot shine it out, you cannot bleach it out, you cannot walk it out, you cannot grow it out; it will survive all your theories, it will outlive all your efforts; it is a living and deadly thing, and clings with the grip of hell and the tenacity of Satan to your soul. It defies everything except the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. But here is a divine energy that conquers it. Use the light you have, and begin at once to obey the Lord Jesus by confessing and renouncing your sins, and by faith take the Lord Jesus to be your Savior, and the blood of Jesus Christ shall cleanse you from all sin. Let us thank God,—

There is a great Physician near;
Look up, O fainting soul, and live;
See, in his heavenly smiles, appear
Such help as nature cannot give.

See, in the Savior's dying blood,
Life, health, and bliss abundant flow;
And in that sacrificial flood
A balm for all thy grief and wo.

Then, indeed, you shall have the light of life. Some of you have tried in your own strength to conquer your sins and have failed. But if you have the light of life, the divine fire kindled in your own soul, there shall be One with you stronger than all that are against you. About the year 1600, a man by the name of Heddinger was chaplain to the Duke of Wurtemberg. The Duke was a wayward, wicked man. Heddinger was one of those genuine, faithful souls like John the Baptist, who would stand for the right and God. He rebuked the Duke for some great sin. At first in private, but when that did not effect the desired result, he repeated the rebuke in public. The Duke was terribly enraged, and sent for the brave chaplain to punish him. Meanwhile Heddinger had been holding precious communion with the Savior and, ready for any emergency, went forth with a bright and peaceful face to meet the Duke. But when he came into the wicked man's presence, his

face wore such a look of shining peace and steady determination toward the truth that it seemed to his rude master that there was with him the actual presence of the Lord. The Duke looked at him, and became strangely frightened, and inquired, "Why did you not come alone?" and sent him away unharmed. Thank God, they who live in fellowship and communion with Jesus Christ never need to walk alone; for does not the Savior say, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"?

In one of the old English prisons there was an underground cell for use as a place of punishment. It was so far away from the rest of the prison that its utter loneliness and the awful darkness of the place made it greatly dreaded. Among the prisoners there was a man of refinement, with a nervous temperament, greatly unlike the most of those about him, to whom the horror of this penalty was a fright that haunted him day and night. At length there was some alleged offense against the prison discipline for which he was sentenced to four-and-twenty hours in this dungeon. He was led by the warders to the place; the door was opened; and he had to go down the stairs into its depths. The door was shut. The steps of the warders died in the distance; the outermost door was heard as its slamming echoed in the hollow

places. Then all was still—a stillness that oppressed with terror amidst a darkness that could be felt. Nervous, and full of imagination, the man sank down paralyzed with fear. Strange and hideous shapes came out of the gloom and pointed at him. His brain throbbed as with fever, and mocking voices seemed to come from all sides. He felt that before long the terror must drive him mad. Then suddenly there came a sound of footsteps overhead, and in a quiet tone the chaplain called him by name. Oh, never was any music so sweet!

"God bless you," gasped the poor fellow. "Are you there?"

"Yes," said the chaplain, "and I am not going to stir from here until you come out."

"What, sir?" he cried, fearing that he must have mistaken the words.

"I am not going away so long as you are there," the chaplain repeated. "I heard you were here, and I knew what an agony it would be to you, so I came as soon as I could, and here I am going to stay."

The poor man could not thank him enough. "God bless you," he cried. "Why, I don't mind it a bit now, with you there like that."

All the terror was gone. The awful darkness was powerless to hurt or to frighten him while his

friend was so near, unseen, but just above him. Every now and then upon the silence came the cheery voice of the chaplain, "Are you all right?"

"God bless you, sir; I am all right now," replied the poor fellow, his voice almost choked with his gratitude and gladness.

O my dear friends, that is only a faint illustration of how the Lord Jesus Christ follows after his loved ones, those who give themselves up to be his disciples and his friends. He never leaves them alone in darkness and trial. The darkness loses its terror, the fear is gone, the loneliness of life is over—for the blessed Savior abides always near and destroys the power of all things to harm us. In the darkest hour that can come to our human lives he is standing near us, closer than any earthly friend, and whispers in our hearts, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." This is the blessed Savior whom I proclaim to you. Let him come into your life and dispel its darkness forevermore.

This glorious light of life shines upon our path to-day with its blessed opportunities and privileges; a light which, if we accept it, will lead us to forgiveness, to salvation and eternal life. But if we refuse this light, it will finally pass away from us and leave us in the outer darkness. Once when Christ was preaching he said to the congregation

listening to him, "Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goèth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light." It is true of every opportunity of human life that it is constantly passing, and it must be seized upon promptly while it is passing, or it will wane. Infancy, youth, middle age, old age —how swiftly they pass along, and the opportunities and privileges of one cannot be repeated in another. It is the doom of refusal that one must lose what has been refused. The Revised Version makes this still clearer in its warning: "Walk while ye have the light, that darkness overtake you not." For us to refuse the spiritual light and to turn away from it, is certainly to be overtaken by spiritual darkness. As one well says, our "will not" becomes at last "cannot." If we wait till evening, we have missed the morning. Oh, I covet for you this blessed opportunity to open your heart and life to the incoming of the blessed light of salvation! Use every gracious sunbeam that shines from the heart of Jesus and lights the path to the mercy-seat.

XXII

CHRIST THE LIBERATOR.

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."—*John* viii. 36.

In a recent book of travels, the venerable Dr. Henry M. Field tells a very remarkable story of a famous prison in Tangier, which has a reputation for horror and misery almost as bad as the Black Hole in Calcutta. There is a common saying in Tangier: "No one can go in the prison but prisoners." And no one who goes in as a prisoner comes out alive; for the prison is filled with those who have caught there the most horrible diseases, leprosy and the plague. Many have become maniacs from the terror of confinement and contagion; and those who are not diseased are slowly starved to death. No wonder that the pasha or governor of Tangier commonly refuses admittance to all foreigners. But the difficulty and danger of the enterprise were enough to stimulate Dr. Field to diplomatic exertion, and, at last, a reluctant permission was given him and his companions to enter. The palace and the prison are two parts of one building. There are also two parts to the

prison—one for the city and one for the country convicts. There are no cells, but two large rooms, one for each class, in which the prisoners are huddled together. In the first prison the convicts were not so badly off as they might be; they were busy weaving palmetto panniers for use on donkeys. The horror began in the second prison. It was much larger than the first. The most desperate of the inmates were chained to the pillars by their ankles. All were subdued by the discipline, not of chains or flogging, but of starvation. No prison rations, no food whatever, is given to the convicts. Who eats food must pay for it. The few pence a day which the strongest prisoners may earn do not go far. Many cannot earn anything, and are compelled to depend upon charity—a virtue that does not abound in Moslem countries; so many were dying in the last stages of starvation.

Dr. Field was so sickened and horrified by what he saw that the vision of the place haunted him and he felt he must do something to alleviate the terrible suffering. On Sunday a thought came to him which he immediately put into execution. He sent his servant to the market with a handful of money to buy a donkey-load of bread. Soon the donkey came staggering under the load, piled high on both sides of the panniers. With this Dr. Field started for the prison, taking two soldiers with

him as protection to the bread. He was afraid he might be robbed of it by the guards of the prison, and his charity defeated.

In order not to lose a single loaf, the men dragged the panniers from the donkey's back and spread the loaves upon the floor of the prison. What a sight in that prison, which is perhaps the most inhuman in the world! Then, in order that each convict, were he strong or weak, should get his share, he distributed the loaves himself, one to each. For once every man had as much as he could eat. For many the loaf would last several days. It may well be doubted whether modern travel has afforded a more dramatic or moving spectacle than this Christlike deed. These poor beings were so wretched, and had been so long in misery and despair, that there was no show of gratitude. Some snatched their share and looked bewildered; but most sat silent, like Job among his friends, speechless for misery. Dr. Field noticed one hot tear fall down a leper's cheek as he ravenously thrust his loaf into his bosom.

But the Tangier dungeon, horrible as it is, does not hold all the prisoners who are starving to death for lack of proper food, and to whom the disciples of the Lord Jesus may bring the loaf of comfort and sympathy. There are many prisoners behind bars of loneliness and friendlessness; many

others shut in by walls of grief and sorrow; but the most pitiable of all are those who wear the clanking chains of sin.

The good Dr. Field, however noble his purpose, and however kind and generous his heart, had not the power to liberate a single victim from this awful dungeon. He could only give them food for a day to satisfy the longings of hunger, and then there stretched out before them the prospect of starvation. If he could have set them free from the dungeon, they would have carried with them their deadly leprosy and disease wherever they went. But, thank God, the Lord Jesus Christ has infinitely more power with which to fulfil his generous purposes, and he is able to come and open the prison house to every poor prisoner of sin, and not only bring him out to freedom, but to so cleanse him and make him pure of heart and noble of spirit that he shall walk the earth God's freeman in every sense.

A salvation which only relieved a man from the punishment for his sins in the future would be a very small thing. Indeed, it would be an impossible thing; for sin carries with it its own punishment. There can be no real salvation that does not save a man from his sin. What a poor thing it would be to say to a man who had the leprosy, "You shall be relieved from the result of your dis-

ease, and it shall never bring about your death," and yet leave him smitten with the disease that made him a plague-spot on the earth, and made everybody fear him, and left him a source of horror and misery to himself. Do not these people who preach that God is too good, or too loving, to punish sin make just such a fearful blunder in their conception of what love is? To leave sin in a man's heart—to let him go on sinning, controlled by his avarice, and his greed, and his evil passions, and his unholy lust, and vicious imagination—and give him an eternal life like that; no hell that Dante or Milton ever portrayed is worse than the hell that would naturally come about in that man's soul.

Indeed, that is hell, for a wicked man to reap the fruit of his own doings. No! there can be no salvation that does not save a man from his sins. And that is the precious freedom which the Lord Jesus offers to us. It relieves us from the awful load and burden and shame of sin. Paul cries out, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" referring to an old custom in the treatment of prisoners that has been recently illustrated. Two or three years ago a man came to this country from Siberia with the horrible story of being condemned to work in the Siberian mines, where two men were condemned to be chained

together down in the dark depths, and dig a certain stint of coal each day. One of them died, and so starved was the other that he went on digging the daily stint for both, in order that he might get the dead man's food, until the death was discovered. Think of the poor fellow down there in the darkness with the dead body chained to him, digging through the long hours! Sin is like a dead body chained to us, and I know that the cry of our better self is, as Paul's was, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

There are some times, no doubt, when you drown your better self and go on simply living an earthly, sensual life, refusing to think of your relation to God, of the uncertain tenure of your mortal life; shutting your ears to your conscience and closing your eyes to the certain coming of death and judgment; and thus for a while not caring whether you are free from your sin or not. But every one of you will confess that those are not your best, but your worst, days. There are other days when your spiritual nature utters its protest, when your conscience rouses up and speaks with ringing tones, when you get visions of a nobler life that you ought to live, and when every good thing seems to be possible to you, if you could only rid yourself of some besetting sin, which, like a body of death, is chained about your neck.

I appeal to that better self to-night, and urge upon you that you arouse, by God's help, every power of your will to take hold upon this freedom offered by the Lord Jesus Christ.

What a positive declaration this is of Christ's: "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." What a ringing positiveness there is about that! It is not a thing to be doubted. Every man shall know it in the community, and you yourself shall rejoice in the glad assurance.

Dr. A. J. Gordon, of Boston, once related a very interesting story of Patrick Daley, a real thorough-blood Irishman, who was one of the first men to be converted during Mr. Moody's last great evangelistic campaign in that city. Patrick had been a stanch Roman Catholic by persuasion, but a desperate drunkard by practise. Poor fellow, he had such an overpowering desire to be saved from his evil habit, that he so far broke through the prejudices of his religion as to go and listen to the great evangelist. There for the first time in his life he heard with astonishment and delight that the chief of sinners and the most hopeless of drunkards might find immediate forgiveness and deliverance through surrender to Jesus Christ. He went into the inquiry-room, trustingly accepted the Savior, and entered into great peace and

joy in believing. With his conversion he got rid not only of his heavy burden of sin, but also of the heavy burden of popish ceremonies and superstitions. Several weeks after his conversion he approached Dr. Gordon one day with this story and question:

"You see, your reverence, I know a good thing when I get it; and when I found salvation, I could not keep it to myself. Peter Murphy lived in the upper story of the same tenement with me. Murphy was a worse drunkard than I, if such a thing could be, and we had gone on many a spree together. Well, when I got saved and washed clean in the blood of Christ, I was so happy I did not know what to do with myself; so I went up to Murphy and told him what I had got.

"Poor Peter, he was just getting over a spree, and was pretty sick and sore, and just ready to do anything I told him. So I got him to sign the pledge, and then told him that Jesus alone could help him to keep it. Then I got him on his knees and made him pray and surrender to the Lord, as I had done. You never see such a change in a man as there was in him for a week. I kept watch of him, and prayed for him, and helped him on the best I could, and truly he was a different man.

"Well, come Sunday morning, Joe Healey called

around to pay his usual visit. This was not the worst yet, for Healey used to come to see Murphy as regular as the Sunday came around, always bringing a bottle of whisky with him, and these two would spree it all day till they turned the whole house into a bedlam. Well, I saw Healey coming last Sunday morning, and I was afraid it would be all up with poor Murphy if he got with him. So when I went to the door to let him in, and he said, 'Good-mornin', Pat; is Murphy in?' I said, 'No, Murphy is out; he does not live here any longer,' and in this way I sent Healey off, and saved Murphy from temptation."

Now this was the burden of Pat's question. For he continued: "Did I tell a lie? What I meant was that the old Murphy did not live there any more; for you know Mr. Moody told us that when a man is converted, he is a new creature; old things have passed away. And I believe that Murphy is a new creature, and that the old Murphy does not live any more in that attic. That is what I meant. Did I tell a lie?"

Without further pursuing Patrick Daley's question of conscience, I do thank God that I may preach to you that perfect freedom from sin, and from the power of the enemy, that will save you even from the fear of falling, by the constant presence of the Savior with you.

For years "Striker Stowe," a tall, powerful Scotchman, had held the position of "boss striker" at the steel works. Nearly all the men in his department were hard drinkers, and he was no exception to the rule. But one day it was announced among the workmen that he had become religious; and sure enough, when pressed to take a drink, he said, "I shall never drink any more, lads. No drunkard can inherit the kingdom of God." The knowing ones smiled and said, "Wait a bit. Wait until hot weather — until July. When he gets dry as a gravel-pit, he will give in. He can't help it." But right through the hottest months he toiled, the sweat pouring off in streams; yet he seemed never to be tempted to drink strong drink.

Finally, as the foreman was taking the men's time one day, he stopped and spoke to him. "Stowe," said he, "you used to take considerable liquor. Don't you miss it?"

"Yes," said he, emphatically.

"How do you manage to keep away from it?"

"Well, just this way. It is now ten o'clock, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Well, to-day is the twentieth of the month. From seven till eight I asked that the Lord would

help me. He did so, and I put down a dot on the calendar, right near the twenty. From eight till nine he kept me, and I put another dot. From nine till ten he's kept me, and now I give him the glory as I put down the third dot. Just as I mark these, I pray, 'O Lord, help me—help me to fight it off for another hour!' "

"How long shall you keep this up?" the foreman inquired.

"All of my life," was the earnest reply. "It keeps me so full of peace and happiness that I wouldn't give it up for anything. It is just as if the Lord took me by the hand and said, 'Work away, Striker Stowe, I am with you. Don't be fearful. You take care of your regular work, and I'll see to the devil and the thirst, and they shall not trouble you.' "

O my brother, whatever may be your sin to-night —you know and God knows what it is—I offer you this blessed, glorious freedom. Hear the wonderful message from Paul, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; . . . and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." So vividly and strongly did this conception of Paul's take hold of Martin Luther that he used to say, "When any one comes and knocks at

the door of my heart and asks, 'Who lives here?' I reply, 'Martin Luther used to, but he has moved out, and Jesus Christ now lives here.'" May there be many that shall go free to-night!

XXIII

THE TESTIMONY OF EXPERIENCE.

"He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."—*John* ix. 25.

As Jesus passed by with his disciples, he saw a man that was born blind. The Savior paused, spat on the ground, made clay of the spittle, anointed the eyes of the blind man, and told him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. The blind man obeyed, and came back seeing.

The neighbors of the man were of course astonished. Some of them said, "Certainly this is the blind man that sat by the roadside and begged." Others who were more incredulous said, "It only looks like him." But the man said, "I am he." Then they asked him how his eyes were opened. And he tells them the facts very simply: "A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash': and I went and washed, and I received sight."

Then they brought the man before the Pharisees, and they called the man's parents and cross-

examined them as to the case. They testified that it was certainly their son, and that to their knowledge he had been born blind; but they did not dare to bear testimony as to who had opened his eyes, because the Jews had agreed that if any man should confess Jesus to be the Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself." Then they took the man aside who had recovered his sight, and undertook to put words in his mouth in order to take away the honor from Jesus. They said to him, "Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner." The answer of the blind man is one of exceeding shrewdness as well as straightforwardness. He said, "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."

There were a great many things about the matter that the man did not know. In that age a blind man did not have much chance for knowledge. There were no schools or books for the blind. He did not pretend to understand the prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah. He did not assume to pit his knowledge, as to the legal aspects of such a deed performed on the Sabbath day, against the wily Pharisees. But there was one point where he grew positive, one place

where he was well educated—"One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

And I assure you, brothers and sisters, that right there is the mightest power we have to use in convincing this world of the divinity of our holy Christianity. As has been well said by many another, it is not learning, or argument, drawn from prophecies fulfilled, or miracles accomplished or recorded, wherein lie the grandest power and resource of the Christian faith. Its overwhelming power lies in individual hearts that have been touched by the Divine finger into spiritual life; men and women who, whether rich or poor, learned or ignorant, eloquent or stammering, can stand up in the church or in the home, in the office or the shop, and with glad hearts declare, "'One thing I know: whereas I was blind, now I see,'—once overcome with my sins, now conscious of forgiveness through Jesus Christ my Savior. There are many mysteries yet sealed to my vision. Many problems are yet unsolved. Many questions I cannot answer. But there is one thing, blessed be God, which I do not speculate about and which I believe simply: one thing I know, that my sins are forgiven through faith in Jesus Christ."

In modern times we have too often trusted to other influences. But the early disciples found

this the great theme of their ministry. When Paul was carried before governors and kings to defend himself, he always had recourse to his experience. This wise and eloquent lawyer knew that his strongest and most convincing plea was the story of his conversion to God. When carried before Agrippa he begins his defense by saying, "At mid-day, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me, and them which journeyed with me." And he went on to tell with profound simplicity his religious experience—how he came to know Jesus as a divine Savior, and had given up his life to the mission of bearing testimony to this personal knowledge of Jesus Christ throughout the world.

My dear brothers and sisters, we may well follow his example. And you who are not Christians, I preach to you no vague uncertainty. I come to offer you no husks of speculation. I do not mock you by offering you a stone when your hungry soul asks for bread. I offer you a salvation to be tested by experience, a salvation which you may test by your own consciousness. I offer you the bread of life, upon which you may satisfy the deepest hunger of your soul and arise from the feast strong and full of peace.

If Christianity did not submit itself to the test

of individual experience, there might be some excuse for the people who are heavy burdened and oppressed with business cares. Men might say they had no time to examine into long and difficult problems because their lives were so driven by the cares of this world. But our Christianity comes to us in the personality of a Redeemer who, ever living, knocks even now at the door of our hearts, and if we surrender our wills to him, will become the personal friend and companion of our daily lives.

This religion of experience is just what every one of us needs in the hours of great emergency and trial. There are times in every man's life when mere philosophy or reasoning fail to give him comfort. When troubles come in like a flood, when disease creeps insidiously upon the citadel of life, when the pale horse and his rider appear at the door—what does reasoning amount to then? Simply nothing. In such an hour the soul demands experience. It cries out for the presence of God, for the tender, compassionate Savior upon whose bosom it may pillow itself in peace.

A few years ago a noted literary lady in our neighboring city of New York reclined in an easy-chair waiting to die. She had been for years what is called a "natural religionist," and belonged to a popular club of that faith. She had satisfied

herself with her calm and philosophic theories of life and death during the buoyancy of health. But now the test came. Many of her so-called philosophic friends were about her, and her physician, an intimate friend, sat by and held her hand. She was in great agony of mind. The physician, trying to reassure her, said, "Hold on to your faith! Hold on to your faith!" until at last the despairing woman exclaimed: "O doctor, I am willing to hold on, if you will only give me something to hold on to." The poor woman learned in that solemn moment that no religion can satisfy the soul in the great critical hours of our history that does not become a part of our personal experience.

I am grateful to God that I have this privilege of offering you a salvation that you may test by your own personal consciousness this very hour.

A notorious infidel was once present in a highly literary circle when a lady of international reputation because of her literary work expressed her firm belief in the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. He turned to her with an air of seeming astonishment and said: "Do you believe the Bible?"

"Most certainly I do," was the reply.

"Why do you believe it?" he queried again.

"Because I am acquainted with the Author."

This was her testimony; and all his talk about the unknown and unknowable went for nothing in

view of the blessed assurance born of her personal acquaintance with God.

Bishop Janes used to relate an incident that occurred under his personal observation. A Jewess out of curiosity attended one evening a revival meeting. She was not specially moved by conviction during the service, but as she returned home a thought came flitting across the sky of her mind —"What if Jesus was the Christ?" The thought so settled itself in her mind that she found herself unable to stay away from the meeting the next night, and during the second service the possibility that Christ was the Messiah sank deeper into her heart. She went again the third night, and on that occasion the conviction seized upon her soul that Jesus was the Christ, and she went home horror-stricken with the thought that she was a poor, lost sinner. The agony of her mind was so great that she aroused her husband at midnight, proud and wealthy Jew as he was, and persuaded him to go to the house of a neighboring Christian and get her a copy of the New Testament. Then, as upon her bended knees she for the first time in her life seriously opened the New Testament, a prayer went up from her heart, "O thou God of Abraham, the father of my people, give me light that I may know the truth!" She opened the book at the first chapter of Romans and began to read. She read

the apostle's wonderful words in amazement, until she came to the sixteenth verse, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." These words went through her soul like a flash of lightning from heaven. Then and there she came to a conscious knowledge of the truth. Jesus revealed himself to her as her Savior, and she entered by faith into the joy of salvation.

This same glorious experience may be yours tonight if you will only give yourself bravely and courageously to be the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

An Ohio lawyer once came home and said: "Wife, I have been converted; let us put up the family altar."

"Husband," said she, trying to keep him from talking so loud, "there are three lawyers in the parlor; perhaps we had better go into the kitchen to have prayer."

"Wife," said he, "I never invited the Lord Jesus into my house before, and I shall not take him into the kitchen." He went into the parlor, and astonished the three lawyers by confessing that he had given his heart to Christ and had found salvation, and asked them to join in prayer with him. God takes care of a man when he thus

honors him. For many years that new convert who took Christ into his parlor was the chief justice of the United States Supreme Court—John McLean.

Dear friends, I offer you a salvation to-night that will not only give you consciousness that your sins are forgiven, but will fill your soul with the blessed premonitions of an everlasting life. Hobbes, the infidel, said that death was "a leap into the dark," and Ingersoll, the blasphemer and the apostle of suicide, says he does not know either the captain, or the pilot, or the port, of the ship on which he is sailing; that, indeed, he is in blind ignorance as to whether there be a captain, or a pilot, or a port. But I thank God that you may know the Captain of your ship, and you may be sure of the port toward which she is sailing.

One day many years ago I was riding on horseback over the mountains of southern Oregon, when a stranger came out from a little cottage and, inquiring if I was a minister, asked if I would come in and visit the bedside of a dying woman. I went into the humble dwelling and found a family of children and grandchildren surrounding a very old woman. She was more than ninety years of age. For more than twenty years she had been blind. She was very weak and was evidently near the end of her earthly pilgrimage. I had to

kneel down by her side and put my ear close to her feeble lips in order to catch her whispered words. And while I knelt there she told me that more than three-quarters of a century before, in the old country, she had sought and found forgiveness of her sins through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That was when her life was young. She told me that during all these years of wandering, during which she had buried, one by one, nearly all her heart's loved ones, the sweet consciousness of God's loving presence had never forsaken her. And then, while the happy tears ran down from her sightless eyes over her wrinkled cheeks, and her face glowed with a tender and thrilling delight, she whispered, "I will soon be over there, and I shall see Jesus, and I shall hold all my loved ones in my arms again!" As I knelt there in my young boyhood beside that aged woman, I said to myself, "Here is a soul that is acquainted with the Captain. Here is one who is on speaking terms with the Pilot, and has no doubt about the port to which she is sailing. Like Abraham of old, she beholds a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

I bring you the invitation of the Master to accept this same precious salvation to-night.

XXIV

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."—*John* x. 14–16.

THIS is a beautiful figure if we go back to the land where it was uttered and study it in the atmosphere that surrounded the Savior and those to whom he was speaking. Sheep-herding in this country, where the flocks often number many thousands, and the herders frequently ride on horseback and never lead, but rather drive the sheep before them, can give no idea whatever of the tenderness and love that was conveyed by these words to the people on whose ears they fell from the lips of Jesus. As Frederick Robertson so beautifully says, beneath the burning skies and the starry nights of Palestine there grows up between the shepherd and his flock a unique bond of tenderness. It is a country where at any moment the sheep are liable to be swept away by some

mountain torrent, or carried off by the robbers who lurk in the hills, or torn by the wolves. And at any moment the shepherd may have to save their lives by risking his own. David before going out to fight Goliath astonished Saul with the story of how in defense of his father's flock he slew in one day both a lion and a bear. Jacob reminds Laban how tenderly he cared for his flocks when the drought consumed, and when no doubt it took many a long wandering among the rocky cañons to find in the nearly dried-up springs the water to slake the thirst of the sheep. In this way there grows up in such a country between the shepherd and his flock a very beautiful friendship. It is natural for us to love those for whom we risk, and they love us in return. And in that country the shepherd does not drive his flock before him, but he leads and they follow him. They follow in perfect trust, even though he leads them away from a green pasture and by a steep, rocky path to another pasture which they cannot see and which may be entirely unknown to them, and so it is that they come to love each other. The shepherd knows his flock; he knows every one. He knows each one's peculiar traits and characteristics. He knows each particular mark and spot on its fleece. He knows when such an one fell over the rock and broke its leg, and he carried it home on his shoul-

ders and bandaged it up and nursed it back to health again. He knows when the wolves chased another and tore that gash on its flank, and how at the risk of his life he made a desperate fight in its defense. He carried it off wounded and bleeding, but still alive; and through his loving care made it well again. And thus alone among the desert hills there comes to be this deep, tender sympathy between the shepherd and his sheep. One is the love of the protector; the other the love of the grateful life. And so between lives so distant there is woven by night and day, by summer suns and winter frosts, a living network of sympathy. The shepherd comes to know his sheep, and they come to know him, and will not follow any one else.

A gentleman traveling in Syria relates how he stopped to watch three shepherds who were at a well, watering their flocks. The three flocks were all mingling together at the watering place. The traveler could see no difference between them, and he wondered how they would ever get them separated again without great trouble. But presently one of the shepherds stood forth and called out, "Men-ah"—the Arabic for "Follow me"; and, sure enough, thirty sheep immediately separated themselves from the indiscriminate mass and began to follow the shepherd off up the hill. Then a second

shepherd lifted the cry, "Men-ah"; and a second flock separated themselves and started after him, while the rest of the sheep remained as unconcerned as if no one had spoken at all. The traveler was so astonished that, as he saw the third shepherd preparing to depart—laying his hand to his crook and beginning to gather a few dates fallen from the palm beneath which he had been resting—he stepped up to him and asked: "Would your sheep follow me if I called them?" The man shook his head. "Give me your shepherd's cloak and crook, and let me try," the traveler said. He even wound the shepherd's turban around his head, and standing forth began to cry "Men-ah! Men-ah"; but no sheep stirred. They only blinked at him lazily in the sunshine. "Do they never follow any one but you?" asked the traveler. "Only when a sheep is sick; then the silly creature follows any one," the shepherd said.

What a wonderful commentary this story is upon the figure which the Lord Jesus uses here to represent his relations to us! And what a sure indication it is that we are sick with the deadly disease of sin when we refuse to heed the voice of the Great Shepherd, and go recklessly following strange voices into the dangerous ways of wickedness.

There is no figure used in the Bible which ought

to show us more clearly the tenderness of God's heart for us than this which represents the Savior coming down from heaven to earth, living with us and watching over us like a shepherd, and giving his life for our salvation. Paul says, "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Oh, I know there is that in every one of your hearts which in your best hours hungers for this great, satisfying love which the Savior alone can give! As another has well said, there are times that come in the lives of each one of us when we feel the want of a large and pure and perfect love. For we have hearts ourselves, sensitive, restless, pining with a deep, gnawing hunger hard to satisfy. The cravings of that hunger we may be able to lull for a while by the gains we make in life, by the comforts we gather around us, by the pleasures that brighten our path. But these are mere things, dead, unresponsive; they can give us no sympathy; they may cheer and please and help, but they can return no answer to the warm throbbings we are conscious of within. The heart yearns for something more than things, aches for another heart that can beat in perfect unison with itself. And it is only the perfect heart of our God, who knows the depths and possibilities of our nature, that can completely arouse our best self to life and

satisfy our deepest longings and our loftiest aspirations.

I have been reading recently a very interesting article on the great violin-makers. It seems a strange thing that they all lived within the compass of one hundred and fifty years. They chose their wood from a few great timbers felled in the South Tyrol and floated down in rafts—pine and maple, sycamore, pear, and ash. They examined these to find streaks and veins and freckles valuable superficially when brought out by varnishing. They learned to tell the density of pieces of wood by touching them; they weighed them; they struck them and listened to judge how fast or how slow or how resonantly they would vibrate in answer to strings. Some portions of the wood must be porous and soft; some of close fiber. Just the right beam was hard to find. When found, it can be traced all through the violins of some great master, and after his death in those of his pupils. The piece of wood was taken home and seasoned, dried in the hot sun. The house of Stradivarius, the great master of all, is described as having been as hot as an oven. The wood was there soaked through and through with sunshine. In this intense heat the oil thinned and simmered slowly, and then it penetrated far into the wood, until the varnish became part of the wood itself.

The old violin-makers used to save every bit of the wood when they found what they liked—mending and patching and inlaying with it. So vibrant and so resonant is the wood of good old violins that they murmur and echo and sing in answer to any sound where a number of them hang together on the wall, as if rehearsing the music which once they knew. It is doubtless owing to this fact that when the people could not account for Paganini's wonderful playing they declared that he had a human soul imprisoned in his violin; for his violin sung and whispered even when all the strings were off.

As I meditated on this wonderful resonant and musical power in the wood of these old violins, I thanked God that his great ear could hear music in human souls even when they have been battered and mistreated by sin, even when all the strings were torn off by reckless hands; that still there was an imprisoned soul that appealed to him whose heart is that of a good shepherd, who giveth his life for the sheep. I may be speaking to some one to-night who is discouraged and disheartened and who feels that all the power to make the good music of a pure and holy life is gone, that the chords of life are broken and faith and hope are dead. Oh, I preach to you the tender heart that seeks after the lost and with his shepherd's crook and

his generous plaid will nurse you back again to health and strength, to peace and victory.

The Savior bears with us, and is patient and long-suffering, because he is the Good Shepherd. He is not an hireling that fleeth when the wolf comes, but he is a shepherd for love's sake, and love makes all burdens light. Dr. Guthrie used to tell the story that he was one day passing up a street in Edinburgh, when he saw a little girl carrying a very heavy baby. He was a big-hearted man, and stopped and said, "Lassie, surely that child is too heavy for you." With an accent of surprise the girl replied: "No, sir; he is my brother." She could not understand how her brother could, by any means, be too heavy a burden. If the little girl could carry her baby brother so willingly because of the love she had for him, how much more will the Good Shepherd take your heavy burden of sin and sorrow off your soul tonight if you will only let him.

The Good Shepherd can comfort us in our deepest sorrows, because he loves us. It was recently recorded of a little lad in a London hospital, upon whom it was necessary to perform a surgical operation, and to whom it was impossible, owing to heart-weakness, to administer chloroform, that his father said to him, "Do you think you can bear it, my son?" "Yes, father," replied he, "if

you will hold my hand." With the strength and love of his father given him in the tight grip of the hand, he could bear the pain. So there is no pain or sorrow that can come to a human life that cannot be borne with fortitude and with peace when the Good Shepherd holds us lovingly by the hand.

And then he is a seeking shepherd, who is not willing that any should perish, and who, if there be one lost or strayed away from the flock and in danger of destruction, will leave even the ninety and nine folded, and go and seek after the wanderer until he find it.

A beautiful story is related of General Garibaldi, the great Italian patriot. One evening, in 1861, as he was going to his headquarters, he met a Sardinian shepherd lamenting the loss of a lamb out of his flock. The great-souled Garibaldi at once turned to his staff and announced his intention of scouring the mountain in search of the lamb. A grand expedition was organized. The lanterns were brought, and old officers of many a campaign started off full of zeal to hunt the fugitive. But no lamb was found, and the soldiers were ordered to their beds. The next morning Garibaldi's servant found him in bed fast asleep. When he was awakened, the general rubbed his eyes; and so did the servant, when he saw the old warrior take from under the covering the lost

lamb, and direct him to carry it back to the shepherd. The general had kept up the search through the night until he had found it.

And yet that was only once. It may have been but the whim of an evening. But the Savior has been seeking after you with infinite tenderness and love through all these years, and if you will yield yourself to him to-night, he will carry you in his arms, and all heaven shall ring with rejoicing.

No matter where you are lost amid the mountains of sin, nor what deadly wolf of lust or passion is pursuing you to destruction, the Good Shepherd is seeking you to-night, and if you will, you may be saved. Oh, I would to God I could make you see him as he stands near you in the dangerous cañon where sin has led you, crying out to you in tenderness, "I am the Good Shepherd. I lay down my life for the sheep." At the least opening of your heart he will come. He will count no risk too great; no peril will keep him from your side. Scarred and bleeding from the cross where he suffered for you, he will come to you though you are faint and ready to perish; and, lifting you to his shoulders, he will bring you home with joyous shout, crying to all the good people on earth and to all the angels and ransomed hosts in heaven: "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost!"

XXV

THE INDIVIDUAL MESSAGE.

"The Master is come, and calleth for thee."—*John* xi. 28.

It is a simple but striking story in which this sentence is set like a gem. A Jewish maiden named Mary was sitting alone in her home in Bethany overcome with sorrow. She was dazed with the mystery that hangs about the border-land between life and death. Her brother Lazarus was dead and buried, and there had been buried with him, no doubt, many of the fondest hopes of her life. In the midst of these sad reflections in which with love's pertinacity the memory would recall the minute outlines and tender details of the happy past, now seemingly forever gone, Jesus, the Master, comes. Her sister Martha, an alert, active spirit, has learned of his approach and gone forth to meet him. On Martha's return she bursts upon Mary's reverie with what must have been the startling announcement of the text, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee!" And Mary, when she heard it, arose quickly and went to meet him.

I have recalled this tender little story of the olden time for our study to-night because it sug-

gests the great truth that the Master comes and calls personally for each one of us. Our Lord is no respecter of persons in the sense that there are special favorites of fortune on whom he is willing to bestow gifts that are impossible for others; but he has a definite and tender message of hope for every one of us, a message of far more importance and of richer blessing than any of us can fully appreciate or understand. When Mary of Bethany sprang up to go out to meet Jesus, she could not have known that Lazarus was to be raised from the dead, and their home again reunited. But in that hour of her sorrow it was like a sunburst of light on a dark night to know that the Master was near, to sympathize with and comfort their broken hearts. So the Master still comes and calls to us, and if, like Mary, we spring up gladly to meet him, he stays to fill with gladness and blessing our hearts and homes. Harriet Beecher Stowe sings,—

"The soul alone, like a neglected harp,
Grows out of tune, and needs a hand divine;
Dwell Thou within it, tune and touch the chords,
Till every note and string shall answer Thine!

"Abide in me! there have been moments pure,
When I have seen Thy face and felt Thy power;
Then evil lost its grasp, and passion, hushed,
Own'd the divine enchantment of the hour.

"These were but seasons beautiful and rare;
Abide in me, and they shall ever be!
Fulfill at once Thy precept and my prayer,
Come and abide in me and I in Thee!"

I want to lay emphasis upon this one particular truth to-night—that God has created each one of us in his own likeness and image, but has made each a special study of infinite power and wisdom and love. As among the children of a household, while, in a way, all are loved and protected alike, yet each member is thought about and considered, each one stands in his or her own individual relation, with a definite name and personality, with particular traits that endear that one to the heart of the parents—just so truly we are the children of God; he cares for each one of us. And though we have wandered away from the family home, and instead of honor have brought disgrace to the family name, and have sinned against the love of the Father's heart, yet he so loves us individually and personally that he has given the Lord Jesus, the highest and noblest personality among the heavenly host, to buy our redemption on the cross. We have been as specially thought about and loved and redeemed as if we were the only children of our Heavenly Father that had strayed into sin. The Old Testament is full of this idea of the possibility of redemption which is

typical of our redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ. I read you from the book of Leviticus the law of redemption among the Israelites, and because it puts before the mind so clearly this idea of personal redemption, I want to condense for you a story which the Rev. Mark Guy Pearse, of London, tells as illustrating this plan of redemption. I pray God that, in its simplicity, it may make you see the Savior to-night as your very own loving Redeemer.

In a little village among the hills of Judea, there lived a pious Jew who had two sons. He had trained them up in the fear of the Lord, and taught them to love each other very tenderly, so that in his old age they were his comfort and joy. But while they were yet in their young manhood, he died, and they laid him away to rest with his fathers. Then Benjamin, who was the younger son, went forth as a merchant; and Jonathan, his brother, remained at home on the plantation and tilled the farm. It was a pleasant home, with the vines clustering about it and dark green olive trees standing round, and the rich grain fields in the valley below. His flocks of sheep spread over the plain, and everything about him prospered. And, indeed, there would not have been a happier man in all the land than Jonathan, save that he had one sorrow—his brother Benjamin had gone

away to what they thought in those times was almost the end of the earth—he had sailed for Spain, and nothing was heard of him for many years.

Thus things went on until one year there came a great drought in the land of Judea. The fields were parched and barren; the olive trees withered; the vines died; the flocks perished. All Jonathan's substance melted away like snow in the fierce heat of the sun. Month after month the drought lasted, and when it was over he was compelled to borrow at the money-lender's in order to buy seed to sow his farm again. But the next harvest was scarce worth the gathering, and poor Jonathan was compelled to sell his land to his rich neighbor to pay back part of the money. The old home was his no longer. He looked at his old familiar haunts with a broken heart. He saw strangers coming in and out of the old house, and the haughty master passed him proudly by unnoticed. Without home and without friends, he could only stand and look at the house where he was born, and where he had spent his happy boyhood. He could only look at it, for he dared not set foot in it, he was so poor, and there was none to buy it back for him. Discouraged and out of heart, he tried his hand at one thing and another and failed everywhere. All he had was gone, and at last, partly to pay his debt, and partly that he himself might live, he

had to sell himself as a bondman, a slave to his rich neighbor. His master had to give him food enough to live on, and some rough clothes, and a shed to sleep in; but he belonged to his master. And though the law did not allow him to be treated like slaves have been in many places, yet he was really a slave, he could not please himself, but had to do just what his master told him.

The law said that, if he were able, he could redeem himself. But he toiled all day in the hot sun for his master, and had no strength left to do anything to make a little money to buy himself back. So he could only go on working and sorrowing, without any hope of redeeming himself.

If you look at the chapter again in Leviticus, you will see that there was another way in which freedom might come to him. If he had a rich relative—a brother, or a son, or an uncle, or a nephew, or a cousin—that kinsman might come and pay down the price of his redemption and buy him back. But as poor Jonathan thought of that, he only sighed very sadly. He knew if Benjamin were living and could help him that he would spend his last penny in doing it. But he had not heard of him for many years.

What an illustration this is of our condition as sinners before God! The Bible truly tells us that we are "sold under sin;" that we are "led captive

of the devil at his will." We have nothing with which we can buy ourselves free. Sometimes we try to break away and escape from our hard master, sin, by our own strength and our own devices, but we always fail. We have heard of slaves running away, in the old slavery days in this country, and finding their way over what was called the "underground railway," through many perils and hardships pressing onward to Canada, and thus to freedom. But who can run away from the cruel master, sin? It is like the boy who on a moonlight night thought he saw a ghost and ran away from it as fast as he could run. But the faster he went, the faster it went; wherever he turned, it followed; until at last he tripped and fell, and then he found out that it was his own shadow. Our sins stick to us like our shadows. We cannot run away from them. Many men are so restless on account of their sins that they are driven from one business to another, from one town to another, and often from one land to another, hoping that in some new place and under some new circumstances they will have peace; but it is vain and hopeless so long as they carry their sin with them wherever they go. What can we do, then? Like Jonathan, we have nobody to buy us back.

Now comes a brighter part of our story. Far off in the land where he dwelt, Benjamin lived

all this time in great prosperity. He was a rich merchant, with very many ships. His house was a palace, and kings and princes were glad to make a friend of him, and to borrow large sums of his money. But finally, in a roundabout way, through a traveler from the old home-land, the news came to Benjamin in his palace of the misfortunes that had befallen his brother Jonathan—that the old place had gone into the hands of strangers and that his brother, whom he loved with all his heart, was a poor slave in the fields where they had played together in their boyhood. His heart was broken for his brother. What was all his wealth and splendor if his poor brother was actually a slave? So, leaving all the beauties and luxuries of his home, he got on board one of his ships, and set sail for the land of his fathers. He came across the Mediterranean Sea, tossed by wild storms, and once or twice was in great peril because of the cruel pirates that lay along the coast. But he did not mind any of these things in his eager love to rescue his brother. At length he landed, and hastened at once to the old home among the Judean hills. There it was before him, just the same. The vines covered it; new olive trees there were so like the old that he could not tell them apart, and the merry laugh of the children, recalling the gladness of his own boyhood, rang from within.

What if it were only a dream after all? With a trembling voice he inquired for Jonathan. Then a stranger appeared at the door. He was the master. His was the house, and his the vineyards, and his the flocks of sheep.

"Is he living who once lived here?" asked Benjamin, with tears; "Jonathan, is he living still?"

"Jonathan," cried the stranger, "he is living, but——"

"God be praised!" said Benjamin.

"But he has lost all his wealth," said the stranger, "and has fallen so poor that he sold himself to me. You will find him at work in my field."

"Oh," said Benjamin, "I will soon put a stop to that; but I do so long to go and see him. But first let me tell you that I am his brother, and that I have come back purposely to redeem him." And he beckoned the servants to bring the big sea-chest of money that he had brought with him.

The master could not please himself about it. No matter whether he wanted to or not, he had to take it. The writing was made out, and the money paid. Jonathan was really redeemed. Yet he worked on yonder in the fields as if he had no rich kinsman in all the world.

"Now," said Benjamin, as soon as that was done, "I must redeem the house and the land and all the inheritance of my father."

Again they counted up how much it came to, and again the servants counted the money. Then the house and the land and the vineyards belonged to him again.

"And now," cried Benjamin, rising from the table, with its heaps of money just paid out to redeem his brother and the old home, "let me go forth and tell him." His tears shone with very gladness as if his heart were too full of joy and ran over at his eyes.

He soon came to a poor slave, a pale, thin man, stricken with grief, with a few old clothes tied around him, so that Benjamin could hardly believe that it was really his brother. Brushing away the tears and trying to hide his feelings as well as he could, he came up to him.

"Jonathan, do you know me?"

The poor bondman looked up for a moment and sadly shook his head. Hope was dead and buried long ago.

"I am Benjamin, your brother, and I have redeemed you. Don't you remember when we used to play together on the hill yonder, how you used to carry me on your shoulders when I got tired, and used to call me Benny? O Jonathan, I am your brother, and I have redeemed you!" And the rich merchant threw his arms around the slave's neck, and kissed him again and again, and wept.

"Redeemed me!" cried Jonathan, bewildered. "You Benjamin—and redeemed me!"

"Yes, my poor brother. God be praised! you are your own again. And our father's house, and the land of your inheritance, is all yours."

It was hard for Jonathan to realize it, but with his brother standing there before him, with the love-light shining in his eyes, it finally burst upon his soul that he was a redeemed man. He left the drudgery of the slave. He flung away the rags, and put on the robes of a gentleman again. He went back to his father's house and claimed it as his own. It was all his own—vineyards and olive orchards, fields and flocks, sheep and oxen. All his own, for his brother had bought him and all of it back from bondage; his brother had redeemed him.

O my dear brother or sister, you who are conscious to-night that you are sinners against God, and have no power to redeem yourselves, I hope you have been seeing the glorious possibilities which may come this night to your own soul in this happy redemption. There is no slavery more bitter than the slavery of sin, but our Elder Brother has come to redeem us,—

> "With pitying eyes, the Prince of grace
> Beheld our helpless grief;
> He saw, and—O amazing love!
> He ran to our relief."

He was born in our midst in the manger at Bethlehem that he might become our kinsman, a brother to us all. He came bringing our ransom price. He did not order the angels to carry gold and pearls for our deliverance, for all the gold and all the diamonds in the world could not have bought our salvation. He freely gave himself as a ransom for us all. "We are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ." And now Jesus comes to you, to you personally, your loving brother, and tenderly says to you, "I have redeemed thee."

Surely, brother, you will not go on sinning any more and serving that old tyrant, the evil one, when you know that Jesus has bought you back, that you are already redeemed and may if you will enter at once into the joy of your new liberty and ransomed inheritance! How useless it would have been for the old master to come blustering around at Jonathan, and ordering him about. Jonathan would have cried out with contempt, "Away with you, sir; I have had much to do with you already. My brother bought me out of your service. He paid the uttermost farthing; and you need not think I shall ever have anything more to do with you or for you!" Oh, I pray God it may be so with you to-night. Jesus has paid your debt.

Why not put off the old rags that indicate your slavery to sin, and put on the new robes of righteousness which belong to you? Do you suppose Jonathan would have kept on his wrist the iron ring of the fetters that marked him as a slave? No, indeed! it was the first thing that was broken off and thrown away. And I haven't a doubt that Benjamin gave him a splendid golden bracelet to wear there, to be to him forever a token of the love that redeemed him. So I beg you to-night to fling away every token and badge of the old service of sin, and wear henceforth the badge of the Savior's love, and let all the world know your devotion to your glorious Redeemer.

XXVI

THE TEARS OF JESUS.

"Jesus wept."—*John* xi. 35.

"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears . . . became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."—*Heb.* v. 7, 9.

"He beheld the city, and wept over it."—*Luke* xix. 41.

Tears are the common language of sympathy in all time, among all people, throughout the world. Men may be divided by language and race and national prejudice, but there is a common bond of fellowship in the tear of gladness or sympathy or sorrow. I saw once in Paris a funeral procession following on foot a little white casket; and though I could not understand a word the mourners said, the tears sprang involuntarily to my eyes, for I knew how a father's heart felt when he followed his little child to the tomb. I stood once on a Dutch ship in Amsterdam and watched a company of stalwart Hollanders, largely fathers and mothers, come in from the country round about to bid farewell to their sons and daughters who were coming in the emigrant

steerage to America to seek their fortune in a strange land. I could not understand a word they said. I had never seen any of them before. But when they pressed each other to the heart in long embrace, and wet each other's faces with their tears as they gave the kiss of farewell, my face also was wet with tears. I knew what it meant to separate from loved ones.

Humanity may be separated and broken into fragments by national lines, by prejudice and caste, but we are bound together by the fellowship of tears. Surely there cannot be a more interesting theme for us to study than these three occasions, the only occasions about which we have any record that Jesus Christ shed tears during his earthly pilgrimage. I do not think anything else could reveal to us so clearly his attitude toward humanity. Language may be misinterpreted, but there is something in every one of us that makes us understand the meaning of tears.

We have illustrated in this first scripture Christ's sympathy with human sorrow and trouble. When Martha aroused Mary in the house at Bethany and told her that the Master was come and called for her, she arose quickly and went to meet him. Her friends who thronged the house supposed she had gone to the grave of her brother Lazarus, and they followed after her, ho-

ping to comfort her, no doubt, if they could; but if not, to at least mingle their tears with her in sympathy. But Mary was seeking not the grave, but her friend Jesus. And when she came to him, she fell down at his feet and cried out, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." And when Jesus saw her, and her friends who followed weeping, his great heart was filled with sorrow and sympathy for them. He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled and said: "Where have ye laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Then it was that Jesus wept, and all the company looking on said one to another, "Behold how he loved him!"

How close this brings the Lord Jesus to us! When he speaks to the raging billows and they are still at his voice; when he touches a blind man's eyes and he goes seeing; when he speaks to a palsied man and he goes away carrying his bed on his shoulder; when he heals the leper at a word—we stand back to bow down in reverence before the majesty of our God. But when he goes with us to the grave where our dead are lying, and stands in the group with tender face and sobbing heart and tear-wet eyes, he is our elder brother, and our hearts go out to him and take him in to be Lord over all forevermore. Let us emphasize it in our hearts this morning that Jesus

Christ is full of sympathy, tender, tearful sympathy, for the sorrowing and the troubled; and we shall never have to stand by the sick-bed of our loved ones, or follow them to the grave, but that he shall stand by us or walk with us to comfort our hearts.

Grand-Pierre, the great French preacher, exclaims, What is a tomb without Jesus? It is an empty and a gloomy place, adapted but to afflict the heart with melancholy and despair. It contains a heap of dust, and a few moldering bones. It is a place of bitter regrets, of ever-flowing tears, and of painful recollections. But when we see Jesus standing at the tomb, hope and life and immortality are grouped about him to console and gladden the heart. No doubt there are many here this morning who are often drawn to visit the spot where are deposited the remains of a father, mother, husband, wife, child, brother, sister, or friend, in regard to whom you cherish the sweet hope of meeting again on the heavenly shore. Then, like Martha and Mary, always ask the Savior to go with you there. Then you will not seek among the dead those who live clothed upon with glory and immortality. Your soul will not be filled with gloom and sad thoughts, but will be drawn upward with hope, and made to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. If

Jesus stands with you by the tomb of your loved ones, you will see the dawn of the eternal day; you will hear his voice who is "the resurrection and the life" saying, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live."

In our second scripture we see the Savior on that dark night of Gethsemane, with prayers and supplications, and with strong cryings and tears, pursuing his work of intercession and mediation for us toward the hour when he is to enter upon his trial and upon the agonies of the cross. Oh, how dear and sacred to us should be those tears of intercession! It was for our sakes that he took upon himself that hour of awful agony and loneliness; for our sakes that he was bowed down beneath that awful load; for our sakes that hour of anguish and suffering, when great drops of bloody sweat fell from his sorrow-stricken face and the weight of a world's sin for which he was to die rested upon him until he cried out in the agony of his soul, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."

As the mountain lifts its head into the sky and bears the brunt of the storm, and carries on its broad shoulders the depths of snow that would crush out all life in the valley below, and draws

the thunderbolt from the cloud that would cut its swath of ruin if it struck the forest in the lower lands, so the great soul of our Savior stood between us and doom, and by his stripes we may be healed. O my brother, how can you harden your heart against these tears of intercession? for they were shed for you, and he still makes intercession for you. When Stephen was being murdered he kneeled down and, looking up, exclaimed, "I see the heaven opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God!" He is there as your intercessor. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." And again the apostle exclaims, "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." And Paul, giving rein to his meditation on the intercession of Jesus, cries out in triumph, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

Are there any here this morning who have been tempted to doubt the warnings of God's Word, which declares that the wages of sin are disaster and death; who have been inclined to go on recklessly in their sins, presuming on the fact that they have sinned as yet without punishment? I bring

home this great truth to such an one this morning, that the reason why your life has been prolonged, and your blessings continued, in spite of your wickedness and rebellion against God, is not because God has forgotten, but because of the intercessions of the Lord Jesus Christ. You remember that tender parable of the Savior about the husbandman who came into his orchard and found a tree on which there was no fruit, and he said to the man who had the care of it, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" And he came year after year with the same result. But it was spared again and again because the workman pleaded, "Spare it another year, and I will dig about it, and give it my special care, and possibly it may bear fruit." So, unfruitful tree that you have been, rendering no return for God's infinite tenderness and love to you, long ago you doubtless would have been swept away as a cumberer of the ground but for the intercessions of the tender, loving Christ. He who shed tears and uttered prayers for you while on earth, and tasted death for every man, still makes intercession for you in heaven.

Surely this tender view of the Savior, weeping and crying in his agony of supplication for us, ought not only to melt our hearts in love for him, but ought to encourage us to bring all our sorrows

and griefs to him without doubt or fear. There is not a single fear that he cannot dissipate. There is not a care so heavy that he cannot relieve it. There is no danger so immediate or so terrible that he cannot deliver us. There is not a loss so great or so sad that he cannot repair it. There is not a tear so bitter that he cannot wipe it away. There is not a wound so deep or painful that he cannot heal it. Surely if when on earth he wept for us, now that he is glorified at the right hand of God, he will not be less compassionate to deliver and to console! Oh, I pray that every one here to-day, whether you have hitherto known him or not, may turn to him for that consolation and comfort and abiding peace which the world can never give. Let us thank God that "we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Let no one stay for fear that your sin will turn him from you. Your very needs will arouse his deepest sympathy.

Dr. Bernardo, of London, the great philanthropist, relates that he was once standing at his front door on a bitter day in winter, when a little

ragged chap came up to him and asked for an order of admission into his Home. To test the boy, he pretended to be rather rough with him. "How do I know," he said, "if what you tell me is true? Have you any friends to speak for you?" "Friends!" the little fellow shouted. "No, I ain't got no friends; but if these 'ere rags,"—and he waved his arm about as he spoke—"won't speak for me, nothing else will." So you may be sure your very needs are the strongest appeal to the Savior. And if you come to him with all your heart, just because you need him most, you shall have most of his sympathy and love.

And now we come to the saddest tears of all—the tears of sorrow over lost souls. Jesus on one occasion drew near to the city of Jerusalem, and as he came near and beheld the city which had been so greatly on his heart, and which he had given such great opportunities for salvation, and which was so soon to reject him and with cruel hands to crucify him, he could not restrain his sorrow for their coming doom, and as he wept sad and bitter tears he exclaimed, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." What makes these tears of the Savior so inexpressibly sad is that they were hopeless tears. Jerusalem had sinned away its day of

grace, and, though the city knew it not, it was doomed. O my brother, I bring you this solemn truth, that even the dying love of Christ for your soul, which finds its expression in tears, may after all be in vain and may not save you. It is possible for you to frustrate the grace of God. It is possible for you to grieve the Holy Spirit until he will take his farewell. It is possible for you to resist the tender knocking of the Savior at the door of your heart until he will go away with hopeless tears. The scripture gives us the record of one who resisted the Spirit of God and so wasted his birthright that after a while, when he would turn to God, he found no place for repentance—that is, no chance for change—though he sought after it with bitter and hopeless tears.

The historians tell us that Charles IX. of France, in his youth, had humane and tender sensibilities. The demon who tempted him was the mother who had nursed him. God have mercy on a mother who so forgets the sacred boon and bond of motherhood that she does not throw all the power of her influence and life for the good of her child and the safety of its soul! It is said that when at first this unnatural mother proposed to Charles the massacre of the Huguenots, he shrank from it in horror: "No, no, madame! they are my loving subjects." Then was

the critical hour of his life. As Professor Phelps so well says, had he cherished that natural sensitiveness to bloodshed, St. Bartholomew's Eve would never have disgraced the history of his kingdom, and he himself would have escaped the fearful remorse which crazed him on his death-bed. To his physician he said in his last hours, "Asleep or awake, I see the mangled forms of the Huguenots passing before me. They drip with blood. They make hideous faces at me. They point to their open wounds, and mock me. Oh, that I had spared at least the little infants at the breast!" Then he broke out in agonizing cries and screams. Bloody sweat oozed from the pores of his skin. He was one of the very few cases in history which confirm the possibility of the phenomenon which attended our Lord's anguish in Gethsemane. That was the fruit of resisting, years before, the recoil of his conscience from sin. He trampled his conscience under foot, but he did not escape that which we call "remorse," a word which comes from the Latin word which means "to bite back."

O my brother, my sister, you may sin against your conscience, and trample upon those tender impulses of your soul that would turn you to the Savior, but the day will come when your conscience shall grow rabid, like canine madness, and

"bite back" with a malignant venom which has no remedy. For persistent and unrepented sin even the divine Savior has only bitter and hopeless tears.

But no doubt many turn away from this awful picture and say: "I am in no such danger. Against any cruelty, or any vicious crime, my soul revolts." O my friends, it is sadly true that perhaps more souls are lost through frivolous and giddy sins than through those that have about them the outward elements of tragedy.

Some year ago a gentleman from New York was traveling in the South, when he met a young girl of great beauty and wealth and married her. They returned to New York city and plunged into a mad whirl of gaiety. The young wife had been a gentle, thoughtful girl, anxious to help all suffering and want, and had never dreamed of living other than a Christian life. But in her new sphere she had troops of flatterers, and her soul was carried away with the intoxication of society. She lived for the one object of enjoyment. She dressed and danced, hurried from ball to reception, from dinner to opera. Scores of young girls supposed her to be a proper object of envy, and that her life was without a care and the most desirable to be imagined. But on her return from a trip to California an accident occurred on a railroad train

and she received a fatal injury. She was carried into a wayside station, and there, attended only by a physician from a neighboring town, she died.

The physician afterward declared that it was the most painful experience of his life. He had to tell her that she had but an hour to live. She was not suffering any great pain; her only consciousness of hurt was that she was unable to move, so it was no wonder that she found it hard to believe him.

"I must go home to New York," she said, imperatively.

"Madam," said the doctor, "it is impossible. If you are moved it will shorten the time you have to live."

She was lying on the floor. The brakemen had rolled their coats to make her a pillow. She looked about her at the little dingy station.

"I have but an hour, you tell me?"

The doctor was greatly moved by her anguish, but was compelled to say sadly, "Not more."

"And this is all there is left me of the world? It is not much, doctor."

The men left the room, and the kind-hearted physician locked the door that she might not be disturbed. She threw her arms over her face and lay quiet a long time; then she turned on the physician in a frenzy—

"To think of all that I might have done with

my money and my time! God wanted me to help the poor and the sick; it's too late now. I've only an hour." She struggled up wildly. "Why, doctor, I did nothing—nothing but lead the fashion! Great God! The fashion! Now, I've only an hour! an hour!"

But she had not even that, for the exertion had proved fatal, and in a moment she lay dead at the doctor's feet.

The physician declared that he never heard a sermon like that woman's despairing cry, "It's too late."

I fear there are some here this morning who are in danger of destroying their souls for time and for eternity with giddy, silly, foolish pleasures and frivolous sensualities that will seem to be such nothings indeed when you see them in the light of the glorious destiny which you threw away recklessly in exchange for them.

Oh, I thank God it is not yet too late! If, like Peter, who, when he was brought face to face with the fact that he had denied him and grieved his loving heart, turned to his Lord again with bitter tears of repentance, you shall come to him to-day, repenting of your sins, and forsaking them and accepting his salvation, you may know the joy of his tears of fellowship and sympathy and enter into glorious union with him here and forever.

XXVII

THE DIVINE MAGNET.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."—*John* xii. 32.

PROBABLY the largest and strongest magnet in the world of a physical sort is that at Willet's Point, New York. It came to be made by accident. Major King happened to see two large Dahlgren guns lying unused side by side on the dock. He immediately conceived the idea that a magnet of enormous power could be constructed by means of the cannon, with submarine cable wound around them. The magnet stands about ten feet from the ground, is eighteen feet long, and has eight miles of cable wound about the upper part of the guns. It takes a force of twenty-five thousand pounds to pull off the armature. A crowbar applied to the magnet required the combined force of four strong men to tear it away. A seemingly impossible experiment was performed with some fifteen-inch cannon-balls. They were solid, and as much as a strong man could lift, yet the magnet held several of them suspended in the air, one under the other.

But that is an insignificant magnet compared to that about which we are to talk to-night—a magnet which is to draw men's wills, their hearts and affections, from all else toward this common center. Bishop Simpson said that in his boyhood he never could understand the prophecy which declares that the church of Christ shall be established on the top of a mountain and all nations shall flow unto it. He could not understand how the flowing would be up-hill. But he went one day into the workshop of a friend and saw in the dust a parcel of steel filings. His friend had a magnet, and as he drew it near to the steel filings they were attracted to it and kissed the magnet. Then said Simpson, "Give me a magnet large enough, place it on the mountain-top, and it will draw all nations unto it."

It is the sublime claim of Jesus Christ that he is that magnetic center, and that the moral natures of the world will continue to be attracted and influenced by the heavenly magnetism within himself until all are drawn to him—"And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

Our first thought, then, is a reflection or question based upon a fact. Jesus the Christ has been lifted up these eighteen and a half centuries. That is a fact which no one doubts. The veriest infidel will admit that no other name stands so universally before the public gaze, that no other utterances

are so carefully studied by the thinking nations of the world, as the utterances of him who is the author of this text. Now the question which I desire to ask in view of this fact is this,—Is there that in the teaching and character of Christ which is likely to attract men and women of the world to him? I confess that if this question could be answered in the negative, then my hopes of the triumph of Christianity would be prostrated. Well, let us see. What are the real wants of the human soul? What is likely to attract us?

I am sure that we will all agree that the first anxious longing of the soul is for sympathy. Life's hurts and disappointments begin early, and the home is established and arranged to meet this want. A mother's sympathy is proverbial because this side the gates of heaven there is nothing to compare with it in depth of feeling and comforting power. The throbbing heart which is the center of every new life yearns for this sympathy, and pines and languishes without it. Every great soul that has exerted powerful mastery over the better side of human nature has appreciated this want. An interesting incident is recorded of Francis Xavier, the great Jesuit missionary. Once on some field of labor where hundreds came with their needs, their questions, and their heart-hungers, he was worn almost to utter exhaustion by

days and nights of serving. At last he said to his attendant: "I must sleep, I must sleep! If I do not, I shall die. If any one comes, whoever comes, waken me not. I must sleep." He then retired into his tent, and his faithful servant began his watch. It was not long, however, till a pallid face appeared at the door. Xavier beckoned eagerly to the watcher, and said in a solemn tone, "I made a mistake; I made a mistake. If a little child comes, waken me."

Well, now the time comes when the mother and father can follow me no longer. The day comes when I feel the personality and loneliness of my life. I step over the borders of the home fireside and become one of the larger family of the world. Men find me in the way of their ambitious designs, and lay on me the cruel hand of opposition. I make blunders in my unskilled use of the busy world's sharp tools, and am wounded and sore in my toil. My heart grows lonely and weary and anxious. Those I learn to love sicken and fade before my eyes. I watch them, and they go down to the grave, while my heart breaks and my hopes vanish. How my heart yearns for sympathy! I look this way and that, but the same story is written in the wrinkles of every cheek. The skeleton is in every house. The hearse is in every street. Where shall I find sympathy or comfort? I grow

timid and shrinking and afraid. Above all other things in the world I need comfort and sympathy, and in that hour Jesus Christ comes and stands before me with loving, kindly presence and says: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Do you think there is anything in that to attract a world heart-broken with its sorrows and griefs? Ah, you might as well ask, "Is there anything in the mother's loving arms to attract the lonely child crying in its fright?"

But that is only one of my wants. I find that in the struggle for life evil spots have clung to my robes. A deep-seated sore has been made in my moral nature. I have formed habits that are evil, and that already begin to dictate to me my course, so that "when I would do good, evil is present with me, and the evil I would not, that I do." And to my great alarm, as I advance in years and character forms into permanence, this adverse feeling toward the good, this overmastering passion toward the bad, these evil lusts and appetites, grow with the years and fasten themselves more firmly in control. It seems certain that these sins which are mastering me intend to hold the reins of my weakening will down to the end, and I can see no reason why they shall not vault the gulf of death and maintain their mastery on the other shore.

Joseph Cook quotes from the traveler Rancke a theory prevalent among the tribes of Greenland. Those men of the lonely North say that if a sorcerer will make a stirrup out of a strip of sealskin, and wind it around his limbs, three times about his heart, thrice about his neck, seven times about his forehead, and then knot it before his eyes, that sorcerer, when the lamps are put out at night, may rise into space and fly whithersoever his leading passion dictates. So my poor soul puts itself into the stirrup of sin and rebellion against God. It coils the strands about itself. They are thrice wound about my heart, and three times around my neck, seven times around my forehead, and knotted before my eyes, and I can see no reason why, when the lamps are put out in my earthly life, I shall not rise into the unseen future and fly whithersoever that wicked, unholy passion dictates.

Who, then, shall free my soul from these evil bonds? How men have sought answers to that question, all history seeks to tell you. But they have sought in vain until, like Nicodemus, they have stood in the presence of Christ, and he has uttered his wondrous revelation, "Ye must be born again." He teaches us that men everywhere, high or low, ignorant or enlightened, partially moral or wholly degraded, without regard to class

or caste, may under the forgiving influences of divine grace be in deed and in truth born again; that it is possible that old things shall pass away and all things become new; that the evil mastery of the brute may be left behind, and the soul enter into the higher servantship of love and peace. Is there nothing in that, my brother, that will attract the soul, conscious of the cruel bondage of sin? So long as men hate slavery and love liberty, Christ will draw them to his victorious standard.

But I have still another great want. In an unexpected day a coffin comes gliding into my home, and when it goes out the light of my life goes with it. My breaking heart knocks against the walls of silence to find some doorway, or at least some answer to its questioning. Shall I see my beloved again?

I am to die. I know it. Sometimes I thrust it aside in the busy whirl of the day; but the consciousness lies down with me at night that I am here only for a few days. Soon I must go—ah, but where? Is there another life, or is the grave the end of all? Is the life of the flitting midge of evening, or of the poor foolish moth which extinguishes itself in my lamp, the symbol of my life—except that mine is a little longer? Is there naught of me but dust that shall return to dust? Or shall I live again? The mightiest hearts that have ever

throbbed have quaked with terror in the presence of this all-absorbing problem.

This question finds its full and complete answer only in Jesus Christ. It is hinted at and suggested and implied in the Old Testament, but Jesus brought truth and immortality to light.

Many years ago, over here in Plymouth Church, Henry Ward Beecher painted a picture like this: You are a poor man and ignorant. There is a written document lying in a chest in your room. You cannot read the writing, and you do not know what that document contains, but you have a suspicion that by it you might become the inheritor of great fortune. You take it out sometimes and look at it, and vainly wish that you could read it; but you put it back without gaining any knowledge of its purport. By and by some kind friend, learned in the language in which it is written, comes to your home, and the document is taken out, and he examines it for you. He reads, and as he reads grows more and more attentive. He stops to ask you, "Who is your father? What was his father's name?" You are full of interest and impatience to know what its contents are, until, unable to control yourself, you cry out, "Tell me what it is. Do not hold me in suspense. What is the news?" At length he says, "Why, sir, do you know that whole estate is yours? Here is your

title. This is a will. The evidence is unquestionable. You are a millionaire. Your poverty is gone." "Read it again!" you exclaim. "Read it aloud, so that I can hear the words! Can it really be so?" Until at last you are convinced and enter into the sweet comfort of the knowledge.

So the world had heard whispers of immortality. There had been clouds and flaming chariots and vague, uncertain visions. But at last Christ came and opened to us God's will as it is revealed in the New Testament, and made known the wondrous treasures of our inheritance. He read it aloud to listening ears—"In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, you may be also"—until men caught up the refrain and have been preaching in every graveyard of earth that forever and ever man shall live.

So long as the life-boat will attract the sailor battling for his life amid the waves, just so long the glorious hope of immortality through Jesus Christ will charm men from their fears to his resurrected side.

And so we find that these great characteristics of our Savior have their echo deep down in the wants of human nature. Down at the mouth of the Columbia River are many great iron buoys

anchored solidly in the bed of the ocean for the safety of the mariner. The sailor sails out past one of these buoys on his voyage and travels around the globe, and comes back after years of absence to be greeted by the same buoy, keeping its immovable watch. Since he last saw it the drift and float of a hundred storms have been washed past it on the current out to sea, yet it remains. It remains because it is not a mere drift, afloat on the surface of the water, but is anchored to the solid rock on the ocean-bed. So while the philosophies and speculation of men, and false religions, are swept from their moorings in the storms of the ages, and drift helplessly out to sea, the power and fame and gracious influence of Jesus Christ abide, and he multiplies his converts day by day, because the great blessings with which his gracious hands are full meet those deep necessities and wants that are anchored in the very bed-rock of our being. And so long as man is man, and Christ is Christ, he and he only will be able to satisfy the longings of our immortal souls. My dear friends, I pray that you may yield to the heavenly magnetism that is tugging at your heart, and come to him even now!

XXVIII

THE CURE OF TROUBLE.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."—*John* xiv. 1.

PROBABLY this fourteenth of John is the most popular chapter in the Bible. If all else were to be blotted out and we were only going to have one chapter left, I think that the majority of the votes of Christendom would retain this. Surely no other chapter is used so frequently in the darker hours of human life. How often is it read in the sick-room. How many weary, tired ones have pillowed their heads upon it and found it softer than down! How many have lost their fear of death and come into glorious faith in the immortal life through the open, welcoming doorway of this wonderful chapter!

It was spoken first to a little company of men who were in trouble. It was at the last supper which Jesus had with his disciples. The meal had ended, and Judas had slipped away into the darkness and gone out to hunt for his fellow-conspirators and complete the betrayal of his Lord. It is just before the Savior rises and leads them

out into the garden of Gethsemane. The conversation about his betrayal—which had aroused their sensitive hearts and caused them to look into the faces of each other with alarm and astonishment and cry, "Is it I, is it I?"—had filled them with gloom, and the Savior speaks to them these wonderfully comforting words, and gives them the assurance that though absent from them in the flesh, he will still be loving them and caring for their interests; that he will not forget them, but in the Father's house of many mansions will be preparing a place for them. He will be their representative in heaven, caring for their treasures and preparing the way so that when the journey of life is over, and they have finished the work given them to do, heaven will be ready to receive them. He will come to meet them, and eternity shall be spent in glorious fellowship with himself.

Not only does he promise them this future reward and heavenly rest, but he assures them that their life on earth is to be full of sympathy, and comfort, and victory. "I will not leave you comfortless," he says, "I will come to you." And furthermore, he declares that the presence of God shall so dwell with them that they shall have greater triumph after his departure than while he is with them. Perhaps they did not understand how that could be possible until Pentecost, when

the three thousand converts were made in a single day.

Napoleon once said, "When I am dead, my spirit shall come back to France and throb in countless revolutions." And his words have been verified. The revolutionary spirit has not yet died out in France, and the curse of that man who was incarnate selfishness still stirs discord and trouble in Europe; but it is growing less every year and is gradually fading out and dying away like an echo. But while it is true of Napoleon, and true of every such man, that his influence lessens as you get farther away from him, the influence of Jesus Christ rises with every year and every day. That is what Christ predicted when he promised that the Comforter should come to the disciples, and should abide with them and with all those who believe on him down to our day, and forever. "He that believeth on me," said Christ, "the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." Not to get less and less, but larger and greater, in spiritual presence and power, accomplishing greater and greater things, until such mighty velocity shall be gained that nations shall be born in a day out of darkness into light.

The great message of our text is that there is a cure for trouble. How close that brings it to us!

Man is as prone to trouble as the sparks are to fly upward. What little things can trouble us! And what great avenues there are for trouble to come into our lives! Yet real trouble does not come from anything outside of us, but it has its source in us, in our hearts, in our thoughts. Nobody outside of ourselves has really the power to trouble us. Real trouble must come from within us. We speak about trouble from loneliness. But if one's heart is full of a great purpose, and one's hands full of a great work, there is no power in loneliness to give us trouble. Henry M. Stanley found Dr. Livingstone in the heart of Africa, surrounded by savage tribes, where he had not seen a white face for many years, in the midst of indescribable loneliness from any human standpoint; yet he was not lonely, and the presence of Christ was so apparent in his life, filling it with peace and comfort and gladness, giving him victory over every earthly surrounding, that a few weeks of conversation and association with him transformed the infidel Stanley into an earnest believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is no power even in disgrace, in prisons, or bondage, or punishment of any sort, to give one trouble, if one is mastered by a great devotion to a noble purpose. Peter slept like a child in its mother's arms when he was shut up in prison, and

did not hear the angel as he opened the barred doors. He was sleeping so peacefully that he thought it was still a dream after he was taken into the street. Paul and Silas had been whipped and beaten, and turned over to the jailer as the worst possible criminals, and were thrust into the vilest cell in the prison, handcuffed and chained; yet they had a joyous praise service at midnight, and before daylight had sinners at the altar seeking and finding the Lord. John Bunyan spent twelve years as an outcast in prison, and lived in the sweetest peace, and had immortal visions—visions so inspired of God that they will never die, but go on comforting every new generation and, like the words of the Master, widen their influence every year.

There is no power in death, even though it come cruelly and harshly, to destroy this peace. Stephen in the hour of death had the face of an angel, and had comforting visions of his ascended Lord. The stones of the mob, and even the gnashing on him of their teeth, had no power to shut out the glories revealed to him.

On January 10th, 1860, the Pemberton mill, a large cotton factory at Lawrence, Mass., suddenly fell into ruins, burying the operatives in the débris. Some were rescued alive; others would have been, but a broken lantern set the ruins on fire and the

rescuers were driven from their work. As they turned away, they distinctly heard some imprisoned girls who had been brought up in the Sunday-school singing that precious hymn of William Hunter's,—

"My heavenly home is bright and fair."

And up from the flaming jaws of death there came the brave chorus,—

"I'm going home to die no more."

No, we may be sure we carry the source of trouble in our own hearts. Many a man on a throne has been troubled with the bitterest, sorest trouble that man can know. Wise men like Solomon have, in spite of their intelligence and their wisdom, been full of the keenest anguish and trouble. Rich men who lived in palaces, who could fly to the ends of the earth to find enjoyment, and gather luxuries from every clime, have yet committed suicide trying to escape their troubles. Brilliant men, having the ear of the world, poets, orators, statesmen, leaders of great armies, have been mastered by their passions and their lusts, and have fallen like Lucifer from heaven, ending their days in drunkenness and debauch and shame, wallowing in trouble. No, indeed; trouble does not come from things outside of us, but from what

is within us. And if you want to give a man peace and cure his trouble, then you must change his heart.

Let us look at the three elements that enter into this cure of our trouble by the Lord Jesus Christ.

The first is faith. "Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions." Faith in those three great realities is a death-blow between the eyes to trouble. Think of it! I believe in God. I believe that back of all combinations of the universe there is God, and that he has created this universe with all its wonderful beauty and harmony to meet the requirements of his children, to contribute to my joy, to help to educate and develop in me a noble manhood that shall be worthy to dwell with him forever. I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who came out from the Father's heart to be born my brother, to carry the infirmities of my flesh, to share the pains and aches and weariness of my mortal life, to be tempted in all points like as I am, yet remaining spotless and without sin; going bravely to the cross and dying there with joy despite the pain, because thereby he might ransom my poor guilty soul and save me from sin. I believe in the Father's house with many mansions, in the everlasting life after death. Add it up, see what it amounts to. God, Christ,

immortality—how can a man believe that with all his heart without finding his troubles scattered to the winds? And there is no doubt about it to the man who really gives his heart up to obey the Lord Jesus. Paul speaks for all of us when he says concerning his faith in the personal Christ, "I know whom I have believed."

When Dr. Alexander, one of the professors of theology in Princeton University, was dying, he was visited by a former student. After briefly exchanging two or three questions as to health, the dying professor requested his old student to recite a verse of the Bible to be a comfort to him in his death-struggle. After a moment's reflection the student repeated from memory the verse of Paul to Timothy—"I know in whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him unto that day."

"No, no," replied the dying saint, "that is not the verse; it is not 'I know in whom I have believed,' but 'I know whom I have believed.' I cannot allow the little word 'in' to intervene between me and my Savior to-day. I cannot allow the smallest word in the English language to go between me and my Savior in the floods of Jordan."

Love is another element that enters into this divine remedy for trouble. How lovingly the Sa-

vior talks to his disciples. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." How can a man take that consciousness into his soul and yet not be comforted? What more can I say to you than I have said in these days that are gone by about the tender, gentle, compassionate love of Christ?—love stronger than a father's, more gentle than a mother's, more faithful than a brother's, more intelligent than a friend's, abiding with us always, shining out most clear in times of darkness and trouble, and with us in most loving presence in that solemn hour when all earthly friends must be left behind. If there exists this precious love-life between my soul and Christ, surely no real trouble can disturb me.

One other element enters into it, and that is hope —hope that maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. A hope which is an anchor to the soul, cast within the harbor, holding firmly in all storms, victorious over all discouraging experiences, and making a silver lining to every cloud. Thackeray calls hope "the nerve of life." And there can be no other such sublime hope as that with which Jesus Christ sustains and strengthens his disciples. The saddest

thing that is ever said in the Bible about an unconverted man is that he is without God and without hope in the world. Brother, what is your hope to-day? Hope in one's self is futile, it is sure to perish. We must have some hope above and beyond ourselves. Two fishermen at sea were once talking about heavenly things. One of them depended entirely upon his feelings and was always counting up as a source of trust the things he had done. His comrade replied, "Ah, John, you are anchoring in your hull; you must throw your anchor out." There is no safety to be found in our self-righteousness. There is no safe anchorage on earth for a human soul. Above us, within the vale, lies the firm ground where we must cast our anchor. When John Knox lay dying, his friend asked him, "Hast thou hope?" He spoke nothing, but raised his finger and pointed upward, and so he died. All will be well, brother, if your anchor finds holding-ground in heaven.

And the result of the cure is peace. Quaint old Matthew Henry beautifully says that when Christ left the world he made his will. His soul he bequeathed to his Father, and his body to Joseph of Arimathea; his clothes fell to the soldiers, and his mother he left to the care of John, the beloved disciple. But what should he leave to his poor disciples who had left all for him? Silver

and gold he had none; but he left them what was far better—his peace. A lady who had passed through the terrors of the Vicksburg siege and had had the awful din of bursting shells and the roar of cannon and turmoil of war ringing in her ears for weeks, wrote to a friend the night after the surrender: "Silence and night are once more united. It seems to me I can hear the silence and feel it too. It wraps me like a soft garment; how else can I express this peace?" So a man who has been in the midst of the turmoil of passions, who has had the din of rebuking conscience ringing in his ears with warnings and threatenings, who has known regret and remorse, who has heard the roaring of the evil one as he came every day nearer, seeking to devour him, who has sought to do good and yet been led to do evil, when he finally gives over the struggle and surrenders his will and his heart to the Lord Jesus Christ, when his sins are forgiven, his passions are curbed, his heart is cleansed and purified, his conscience is void of offense toward God and men—oh, the blessed peace that wraps that soul about like a soft garment!

O brother, come and accept this peace to-night. For rest assured that the time will come when only the consciousness that you are a poor sinner saved by divine grace will give you peace. Dr. Cuyler says that when the richest man who has

died in New York within his memory was on his dying bed, he asked his attendants to sing for him. They sang the old familiar revival hymn, "Come, ye sinners, poor and needy." The dying millionaire said to them, in a plaintive tone, "Yes, please sing that again for me. I am poor and needy." Ah! what could fifty millions of railway securities and bank stocks do for him on the verge of eternity? One verse out of the fourteenth chapter of John could bring him more peace than all the mines of California multiplied by all the bonds in the national treasury. Come to the Savior to-night, and "my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

XXIX

THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE.

"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."—*John* xiv. 6.

It is said that the fishermen of Brittany are accustomed to utter this simple prayer when about to launch their boats on the deep: "Keep me, my God; my boat is so small and thy ocean is so wide." The conception of God which leads to such a prayer is exceedingly beautiful. And is it not an appropriate prayer for every one of us? When we think of the treacherous shoals that await the mariner on life's sea, of the hidden reefs and the blind passages that entrap the unwary voyager, surely it would not be inappropriate for any of us to pray daily, "Keep me, my God; for my boat is so small and thy ocean is so wide."

This is a sublime declaration of the Lord Jesus Christ which we are to study to-night. Who but Christ could say, "I am the way, the truth, and the life"? Christ is the way to God; he is the way to salvation; he is the way to forgiveness of

sins; he is the way into the Father's heart. How broad is the promise that anything we shall ask of the Father in his name shall be granted unto us. His name is the pass-word at the gate of mercy. His name will open the gates of heaven at last.

Christ is not only *a* way, but he is *the* way to our salvation. How this thought is intensified by the last sentence of our text: "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." He is the only way of salvation.

It is related that some years since a clipper ship called the *Duncan Dunbar*, from England, arrived off the entrance to Port Jackson, in New South Wales. There is only one opening there from the sea. The ship had a valuable cargo and six hundred passengers. The captain had laid a heavy wager that he would put the ship inside "The Heads," in so many days. The last day had come; he must take her inside the harbor that very night, or the wager would be lost. The temptation was great. Peering through the mist by the aid of his glass, the captain discovered what appeared to be the deep, safe, though somewhat narrow, entrance to one of the finest harbors in the world. He made for what he thought was the opening. There was, however, no such passage there. He was about two miles south of the real entrance, at a point on the coast where the

high cliffs declined almost to the sea level, and where the depression of the cliffs has been appropriately named "The Dip." This the captain had mistaken for "The Heads." On came the gallant ship with her sails spread. The man on the outlook suddenly cried: "Breakers ahead! breakers ahead!" But the warning cry was too late. In one brief hour the noble vessel had struck the rocks and was being dashed in pieces by the heavy waves that were breaking in mad violence upon the reef.

Up the rough, unhewn, rocky way, ever since known as "Jacob's Ladder," one solitary sailor climbed—the only one saved out of six hundred on the ill-fated ship, the sole survivor to look down upon that scene of awful wreck. He told the story as the morning dawned, and the telegraph flashed the dread news to Sydney and on to England, carrying grief to hundreds of homes.

How many such wrecks there are every day in the spiritual world! Men are willing to gamble on their chances of eternal life. They take risk with immortal destiny. Oh, I pray that there may be none here to-night so reckless! Christ is the way, and the only way of salvation. Isaiah saw that this was to be the only way, and voices the declaration, "I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no Savior." And Peter declares, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there

is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Some years ago there was a distinguished lawyer who had an only daughter, the light and joy of her father's life. The mother of this young girl was an earnest Christian woman. She had tried to teach her child that Jesus was the only way of salvation. But her husband was an infidel. He had told his daughter that she could get to heaven without the help of Jesus. This daughter loved and honored both her parents; but as her father told her of one way, and her mother of another way, she could not make up her mind which of these two ways was the right one. At the age of sixteen she was taken very ill. One day she said to her father with great earnestness: "Father, I am going to die. What must I do to be saved? My mother has taught me that the only way of salvation is in Jesus Christ. You have taught me that we can be saved without Jesus. Shall I take my mother's advice or yours?" The strong man was deeply moved. He went away to hide his emotion for a while, and then came back to the bedside of his daughter. He took her pale, thin hand in his, and said slowly, but solemnly: "My darling daughter, take your mother's way."

Thank God, Jesus is not only the way, but he is "the living way," and his presence in sympathy

and love keeps the way from being lonely. A little girl was very ill. She asked: "Papa, does the doctor think I shall die?" With a very sad heart, her father said: "My darling, the doctor is afraid you cannot live." Then her pale face grew very sad. She thought about the dark grave, and her eyes filled with tears as she said: "Papa, the grave is very dark. Won't you go down with me into it?" With a bursting heart, her father told her he could not go with her, till the Lord called him. "Papa, won't you let mamma go with me?" It almost broke that father's heart to tell her that, much as her mother loved her, she could not go with her either. The poor child turned her face to the wall and wept. But she had been taught about Jesus as the Friend and Savior of sinners, so she poured out her little heart to him with a child's full faith, and he who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not," put his arms about her and comforted her. Soon she turned again to her father with her face all lighted up with joy and said: "Papa, the grave is not dark now. Jesus will go with me."

Jesus is the truth. And because he is the truth all humanity must finally come to his standard. Jesus Christ stands forever as an example of truth in manhood. When we look at him we know that love and not hatred is our true attitude toward our

fellow-men; we know that reverence and worship is our attitude toward God. All creeds and all systems of truth are to be judged by their capacity to produce men and women like the Lord Jesus Christ. He reveals to us the truth about God. He was God manifest in the flesh. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," was his answer to Philip. When we are in doubt about what we ought to do and are anxious to find the truth, all we need to do is to ask, "What would Jesus do if he were in my place?"

All the truth necessary to salvation was incarnated in Jesus Christ. And whoever comes to the Lord Jesus in simplicity and humility falls naturally into his true relations to God and his fellow-men. Christ is a saving truth, and little fragments of his word have oftentimes been enough to save a soul. Just a little bit of conversation many times carries with it a word about Jesus, or a quotation of loving promise or invitation from his lips, that is the seed-kernel of eternal life in the listening soul. If I speak to anybody to-night who is perplexed about what is the truth, any one who says, "There are so many speculations, and so many theories, and so many churches, that I do not know which way to go," my answer to you is, Cease to speculate and worry about that, and just come to Jesus. You will find truth enough

in him to save your soul. Begin at once to obey the Lord Jesus. He that doeth his will shall know of the doctrine, whether it be true or not. One ounce of obedience to the Lord Jesus will bring you into more saving relation to the truth than any amount of speculation.

Jesus is the life. He is the source of spiritual life in our hearts. When we are sinners against God, the Bible represents us as being "dead in trespasses and sins," but when we come in contact with the Lord Jesus Christ and open our hearts to his coming, we are aroused to newness of life. The life which is to be built up in us is to be like the life of the Lord Jesus. What a grand aim is this which is set before us! Paul in his letter to the Philippians declared that the chief object of his life was to press forward until he had grasped perfectly the life of the Lord Jesus, until his aim and purpose were in complete harmony with the Lord Jesus. How much loftier is this than any aim which the world holds out to us! How much nobility it adds to our lives when we have as the ideal of our living, day by day, that we are to become like the loving, noble, majestic Christ. The acceptance of such an ideal for our life will give a nobleness and a peace which nothing else can possibly give. As Dr. Maclaren beautifully says, how different all our estimates

of the meaning and true nature of events would be, if we kept clearly before our minds that God's intention was not merely to make us happy and glad, or to make us sorrowful, but that through the happiness, through the sorrow, through the gift, through the withdrawal, through all the various experience of life, God's purpose is always one and the same, to mold us into the likeness of our Lord Jesus Christ!

If any of you are living without any great purpose, and, indeed, are conscious that you are cramping your life and narrowing it by selfishness or sin, I want to urge upon you this noble appeal which is made to you in the Gospel, calling you out of your littleness, out of all low motives, out of every narrow and selfish plan and thought, to live a life inspired by the Lord Jesus and in fellowship and harmony with his. To such a life all things are great and splendid. Nothing is little or insignificant, but everything is clothed with the grandeur of the motive and the purpose which sustain and inspire the life.

The rector of a church in London was called to see a crossing-sweeper in his parish who was ill, not long ago. Asking him if any one had been to see him, to the astonishment of the clergyman the sweeper replied, "Yes; Mr. Gladstone."

"Which Mr. Gladstone?" asked the minister.

"Mr. Gladstone," repeated the poor invalid.

"But how came he to see you?"

"Well," answered the crossing-sweeper, "he always had a nice word for me when he passed my crossing, and when I was not there he missed me. He asked my mate, who has taken my place, where I was, and when he heard I was ill, he asked for my address, and when he was told, he put it down on paper. So he called to see me."

"And what did he do?" asked the minister.

"Why, he read some Bible to me and prayed."

To a man who, like Mr. Gladstone, is humbly living the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is as important and as interesting a thing to read God's Word to a street crossing-sweeper, and comfort his heart with precious sympathy, as it is to form a cabinet to govern the English Empire. O my friend, can you not see how it lifts you out of the mud and the mire of worldliness and sin, and brings you up to the mountain-top, where everything wakes new songs in your heart, when you are inspired to rise to fellowship and communion with Christ?

The Savior is calling you to him to-night. This very hour he is offering to be "the way, the truth, and the life" for you. All the blessed invitations of his Book are for you. Every "come unto me" in his wonderful life of mercy and love is for you

to-night. Oh, if you could only realize that it is definitely and personally for you!

Some years ago an Italian journalist, an infidel, began to read the Bible purely as a matter of history to help him in his journalistic work, and his eye fell upon the Master's words, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden." He pushed it back with a smile of contempt, and said, "That's not for me." But nevertheless, after he had gone away, it hammered away in his head all day. And every once in a while the Savior seemed to stand before him, with pleading face and outstretched hands, saying, "Come unto me." In that town there lived a Florentine, a poor carpenter, who was in the habit of explaining the Gospel in his humble way. On the next day, when that heart-struggle was going on in this man, the carpenter came to his study on business. While he was waiting, he cast his eye on the open book lying neglected in a corner, and, as if struck with astonishment, exclaimed, "Ah! you read the Gospel!" The editor replied: "Yes, I read that passage yesterday"—and he pointed to "Come unto me"—"but as that invitation cannot be directed to me, I am not interested in it." The man lied, burying the tempest in his heart under a deluge of sarcasm and laughter. He even tried to make a joke of that very passage, saying, "You see that it can-

not say to me, 'Come,' because I am happy, healthy, rich, therefore the call is not for me." "Indeed, it is for you," replied the carpenter; "it is precisely for you, because you in your prosperity do not know your own malady. Meditate well on this word 'Come,' and on the words 'heavy laden,' and you will see that it is precisely you whom Jesus calls."

These proved to be truly apostolic words, bringing to his senses the thoughtless, falsely happy man, who lied while laughing and who wished to escape from the impulses of his own conscience. The words of the carpenter, like a thunderbolt, shook to its foundation the whole edifice of vanity and self-love of this *happy* sinner, until it fell in a thousand pieces as a glass house under the demolishing hammer, and led by his humble friend he came to the Lord Jesus, conscious that he was heavy laden, and found in him "the way, the truth, and the life." Follow his example to-night!

XXX

CHRIST AND HIS FRIENDS.

"I have called you friends."—*John* xv. 15.

THERE is no sweeter paragraph in the Bible, none with more honey in it for a pure heart, none that ought to be more attractive to the wanderer away from God, than this paragraph in which our text shines as a central gem. Xenophon tells us that when Cyrus gave Artabazus, one of his courtiers, a cup of gold, he gave Chrysanthus, his favorite, nothing but a kiss, which occasioned this speech from Artabazus to Cyrus: "Sir, the cup you gave me was not so good gold as the kiss you gave Chrysanthus." There is no gift in the universe so rich and precious as the friendship of Jesus Christ. The man in the Old Testament who had the grandest title of any was Abraham, who was known as "the friend of God." And you may go into those Eastern lands to-day, and the Bedouins of the desert talk about Abraham as "The Friend." Lord Brooke was so delighted with the friendship of Sir Philip Sidney, that he ordered to be engraved upon his tomb nothing but

this: "Here lies the friend of Sir Philip Sidney." Mr. Spurgeon comments on this, that while there was great beauty in such a feeling, it is a very small thing compared with being able to say, "Here lives a friend of Jesus Christ."

The friendship of Jesus becomes the center about which cluster the friendships of those who love him. His friendship gives stability to all other friendships, and gives us the pledge that they shall be eternal. Dr. Payton Hoge very beautifully sings this thought in his poem on "Lost Friends:"—

"I lost a friend the other day—
His heart was pure and strong and true;
Our days were sweet, but all too few;
He passed from earth—the other day.
But while I see him here no more,
I know that on a happier shore,
Not here, but in eternity,
God will give back my friend to me.

"I lost a friend long years ago—
A while our paths together lay,
And we were happy by the way
Until we parted—years ago.
From out each other's lives we passed;
Each went his way; but yet, at last,
Or here or in eternity,
God will give back my friend to me.

"I lost a friend in years gone by—
A dear, dear friend he was to me.
But something came between, and he
Left me alone—in years gone by.
But some day all will be made plain,
Our lives together flow again,
And here, or in eternity,
God will give back my friend to me.

"I lost a friend—or shall I say,
He lost himself? For sin and shame
Have left me little but the name
Of him I loved and love to-day.
My friend, as lost, I weep, deplore;
But faith says: 'One can save, restore.'
To thee I come—I pray to thee,
O Christ, give back my friend to me!"

The Lord Jesus offers us every element of a perfect friendship. In the first place, he keeps open house for us. He is never gone away. People never want to see him sincerely without finding him. That is one of the first elements of friendship. As you begin to get acquainted with a person, there are many barriers at first to seeing him, especially if he be a public man who has many cares upon him and large interests on his hands to look after. You may see him only at appointed hours, and you will have to run the gantlet of clerks and secretaries, and they will have to satisfy themselves that it is a matter of

sufficient interest to bring to the attention of their chief, before you will be permitted to take up his time with your visit. I remember going once with some friends to make a request of the Governor of a certain State. We had sent in our cards, and while we were waiting in the reception room, a personal friend of the Governor, a man who held no public office, came in past the watchman, spoke to us as he went along, and said, "I won't keep the Governor long," and without asking anybody, walked right into the Governor's inner office, and held his conversation with him before the Governor came out to see us, more formally, in the reception room. He could do that because he was the Governor's friend, and the guard had instructions that he was to come and go whenever he pleased. No matter what business the Governor was attending to, no door was ever locked against him. That is the way the Lord Jesus Christ treats every one that comes to him with penitence, and faith, and love. We can come to him any time. He is never so busy that he will not hear us. There is an open way into his heart. There are none of the invitations given in the New Testament that set up any special office hours, or any hard conditions of being introduced by any special saints, or any priests, or anybody else. When Jesus Christ was here on earth he carried his heart on his sleeve. Poor

outcast women could make friends with him, and did. Poor demon-possessed men, as badly off as though they had had delirium tremens, found him easy of access, and all their devils were banished by conversation with him. Sometimes you see at the lower door of a great office building, "No beggars or pedlers or agents admitted." The Lord Jesus had no such sign over his headquarters. Poor blind beggars entered into loving association with him, and found their sight when he looked on them. Thank God, Jesus keeps open house for all his friends every day in the year! Come to him to-night.

Jesus was always looking on the bright side of the character and conduct of his friends. Isn't that a sure indication of friendship? Many an ordinary acquaintance is willing to give ear to gossip or scandal, and believe reports that put the acquaintance in a bad light; but when you rehearse anything that is detracting and injurious about a person to one of his true friends, you will find the friend very unwilling to believe it, and he will probably say right out, "I don't believe that is so. I know that man as well as anybody does. I believe him incapable of doing a mean thing. There is some explanation to all this. Anyhow, I shall not condemn him, or even allow myself for a moment to think evil of him, until I

know all the facts about this and give him a chance to explain it himself." How many times you have heard a conversation like that. That is a real test of friendship. And that is what the Lord Jesus Christ is always doing with his friends. He does not misjudge them because of outward appearances, and he makes the greatest allowance for their weakness and infirmities. This was beautifully illustrated on that last night which the Savior spent with his disciples, when Judas had gone away to lead the soldiery and the rabble to arrest the Lord Jesus, and when the feeling of loneliness and sorrow was heaviest to bear, when above all other times he needed and longed for friendly association, and he asked the disciples to wait and watch for him while he went apart a little to pray. In that hour of loneliness and darkness, our human nature which he shared and which he was bearing for our sakes longed to feel that they were sitting awake and watchful, full of sympathy and friendship for him, only a little apart from him there in the garden. And yet, for some cause, they could not keep awake, and to outward appearances it seemed as if they were indifferent to his agony and entirely untouched by his entreaties, and were able to drop off to sleep as though nothing of interest to them was about to occur. One can imagine what fierce and biting

sarcasm a man like Napoleon, or Thomas Carlyle, or almost any other famous worldly character, would have used on friends that had treated them with such seeming neglect. But oh, how gentle and tender are the words of the Lord Jesus! The only word of complaint he utters is that little word of astonishment and appeal, "What! could ye not watch with me one hour?" And when they had fallen asleep again and again, see how he makes excuses for them, even when they have no excuse to make for themselves and sit ashamed and silent. He says to them with gentle and loving forgiveness, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." It was as if he had said to them: "I know your hearts, my dear friends. I have not a doubt of you. I know your love. It is only the weakness of the flesh," and then he adds, "Sleep on now, and take your rest." Oh, was there ever a friend like Jesus? How can you stay away from such a friendship?

Jesus Christ enters with perfect fellowship into the joy and grief of his friends, and invites them to enter with the same fellowship into his own grief and labor and triumph. And this again we all recognize as a characteristic of perfect friendship. All of us have some friends, no doubt, and some of us have a number, to whom, when any glad thing comes into our life or we achieve any success or

triumph, it is one of the sweetest parts of our joy to tell it or write it; and sometimes we can't wait for that, but telegraph it to our friends. And when some great sorrow or grief falls upon our life, there are some friends that we must at once notify. It is not only that we want their sympathy in the time of sorrow, although that is precious beyond language to describe, but it is because we know that they would be grieved at heart if we were to bear our sorrow alone and not let them have the privilege of sharing it with us. So the Lord Jesus enters into perfect fellowship in joy or grief, in success or victory, with his friends. One of the most touching and loving little incidents in all the Bible is one recorded in Mark's Gospel, relating how, when Jesus met Mary Magdalene after the resurrection and sent a message of love to the disciples, he sent it in these words of the white-robed angel: "Go, tell his disciples *and Peter.*" I am sure you remember, when you think about it, why Peter was called specially by name in this message. The last time Jesus had seen Peter was on that terrible night when poor Peter thrice denied his Lord, and when the Savior had turned on him his grieved and pitying look that had broken Peter's heart, and he had gone out into the darkness to weep bitter tears of repentance. And so after his resurrection the very first message

that Jesus sent to his disciples, he put in this special kindly pat on the head to poor Peter. He knew that Peter's heart would be sore, and, though he had repented of his sin and was true to the core now, that the devil would be putting temptations into his heart, and would try to make him believe that he had forfeited the Savior's love and esteem, and would never be taken back quite into his old place again; and so while he did not even name the beloved disciple John, he singled out Peter and sent him what he knew would be dearer to Peter than anything else in the world. And after this he came to them beside the sea where they had been fishing all night and taken nothing, and had breakfast with them on the shore, and had a special love-talk with Peter. Oh, you may be sure that Jesus will add to your gladness, and he will take the bitterness and the sting out of your sorrow, if you will come to him with your friendship and your love.

Jesus gives his complete confidence to his friends. He tells them the secrets of his heart. What a wonderful verse this is in which our text stands: "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." There is no greater test of friendship than that. We have many friends that are really

good friends to us and we love them very much, whom we have never admitted into that inner, secret sanctuary. It is your rare, familiar friend to whom you unbosom yourself and tell the secrets of your soul. I repeat it, that is the highest test of friendship. That was the way God treated Abraham. When he was on his way to the destruction of Sodom, and visited Abraham in the desert, before he departed with his angel companions, "the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" and then he opened his heart to him and told him his purpose. That is the way God treated Moses. The scripture record says he spoke to Moses as a man speaketh to his friend. David understood this characteristic of God toward those who love him, and says in the twenty-fifth Psalm, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." And in the book of Revelation, the Savior said to the beloved disciple, John, who still tarried in old age to hear the last words of his Master: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it." How blessed is that secret revelation of Jesus Christ which he makes to those who love him, who walk in blessed fellowship and communion with him day by day, and who enter

with all their hearts into his great mission of seeking and saving the lost! I know that I speak to many of you to-night who know what this means. You have no language to tell the blessed hours of secret communion which you have had with the Savior. No pen could ever describe what it meant when he came to you in your sorrow, when your heart was breaking, and put his loving arms around you, and pillowed your head upon his breast; and though you wept there, the bitterness of your tears was gone, and through your tears you saw a rainbow of immortal promise. Oh, I would you all knew what this blessed friendship is! And if you will, you may enter this night into this holy friendship. Jesus will take you into his circle and open his heart to you and reveal to your glad ear the secrets of his love.

Jesus is a friend who never deserts those who give him their love and their friendship. "Having loved his own, he loved them unto the end." Oh, the blessed constancy of love! Under the meanest conditions of our human life it glorifies our race, and marks us, even when wandering and degraded, as the children of God. That great traveler and naturalist Humboldt tells about seeing a granite mound called "Mother's Rock," at the junction of two South American rivers. It was so called on acount of a certain touching little bit of

history which it commemorated. Three years previous to his visit, a hostile expedition to capture prisoners had been made among these Indians by the Spaniards. Among other prisoners taken was a woman who was surprised alone in a hut, her husband having gone off on a hunting expedition, accompanied by the children. After being carried to San Fernando, the desire to see her children induced her to attempt an escape. She fled repeatedly, but was as often caught and brought back and violently flogged, but without effect. It was then determined to send her to a distant station on the Rio Negro, whence it would be impossible for her to return. While the canoe was passing up the river she flung herself into the stream, was thrown ashore by the waves and escaped into the woods, but was again caught, brought back, and most cruelly beaten. She was taken to a distant station and closely confined, but in spite of her wounds she took advantage of a dark, stormy night to unfasten with her teeth the cords which bound her and again fled in search of her children. For many days and nights she wandered through a trackless forest, at that period of the year inundated, and swarming with venomous reptiles. She swam the swollen rivers; her flesh was torn with thorns and the spikes of the cactus; her only food for days was the large black ants that she caught;

but over all obstacles her love conquered and she reached her children. Oh, if the love of a poor, heathen Indian woman could do that, what cannot the divine and ever-blessed Christ do in faithful constancy and fidelity to you?

I offer you this changeless love of Christ to-night. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." He will love you until the end. He will not desert you because you are sad. He will not leave you because you lose your money. He will not separate from you as you grow old, but his love will grow sweeter when you need him most.

There is only one condition by which you may have this friendship, and that is the one condition on which all true friendships are made. You must give yourself to him. "He that keepeth my commandments, he it is that loveth me," says the Savior, and if you will to-night give yourself up in loving obedience to the Lord Jesus, you may have all the precious gifts of his friendship. Your sins are not great enough to keep him from you. No sorrow or weakness or trouble on your part is sufficient to keep him from you. Your wilful disobedience is all that blocks the way, and the moment you surrender your will to him and begin to keep his commandments and to obey his words, he will come with this gentle, tender, loving friendship and rejoice your heart and glorify your life.

XXXI

THE CONQUERING CHRIST.

"Be of good cheer: I have overcome the world."—*John* xvi. 33.

"Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world."—1 *John* iv. 4.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."—1 *John* ii. 15–17.

THE first of these scriptures presents before us the conquering Christ, who has overcome the world. The second scripture presents to us the conquering disciple, who is a conqueror because within him dwells the conquering Christ, giving to him his own courage and power. The third scripture is a comment on the other two, telling us what is meant by "the world." As John is the reporter of these words of Jesus, the last words of comfort and good cheer which Jesus gave his disciples before entering upon his agony, it seemed to me he would be most likely of all others to know

just what the Master meant by that suggestive phrase, "the world."

We have here three distinct classes or phases of manifestation of the enemy described in the scriptures as "he that is in the world."

First, there is "the lust of the flesh." How the flesh presses on us from every side and through every avenue of our daily lives! It is like a spring flood which comes down from the mountains, causing the river to overflow its banks and spread destruction everywhere. Down on the Mississippi River during the last few hundred miles of its course, the great valleys, covered with rich plantations, are in many places much lower than the river itself. And so the farmers have to build up immense levees against the encroachments of the water. And when the floods come, these have to be patrolled and watched with great care, or all their wide-spreading fields will be laid waste. They cannot let any of the flood through without letting all. They cannot leave one weak spot in the embankment without endangering the whole. So the flesh presses against us like a flood. What havoc has come to this world through the lusts of the flesh! The Bible is full of significant illustrations. In its grosser forms there was young Samson, whose opening years were full of purity and innocency, and consequently full of strength and

power. He could rend every young lion that roared against him, and eat honey out of the carcass of his enemy. But the lust of the flesh wrought his destruction. How many young Samsons there are to-day, born of a good father and a good mother, come out from a reverent and pure home, but the lust of the flesh in one form or another is sapping their vitality, blighting their lives, and bringing about their speedy shame and disgrace. Sometimes it is strong drink. A man thinks he can take his daily glass of beer or glass of wine in safety, and when he gets so he can drink the nauseating stuff without making a wry face, he thinks he is graduating into manhood, into society manners, and fondly imagines that he is coming to fit that much-abused phrase, "a man of the world." It sounds very big and top-lofty, but as often used it means that he is giving way to lust of the flesh, which degrades him to the mere worldly level, and shuts him out from all higher and holier visions and all nobler hopes. Soon the young man begins to lust after the strong drink. He is uneasy and restless and thirsty for it when he does not have it, and so it goes on and on, until he will pawn his little baby's shoes, until he will pawn his wife's wedding-ring, and sell his immortal soul that he may feed the lusts of his flesh.

Perhaps it doesn't take such a seemingly gross

form. Possibly it shows itself in a hungering after money and luxury and ease. There was a young man like that who came to Christ. He was a moral young man. He had kept the letter of the law with great fidelity, but Jesus saw the rotten spot of selfishness in him, and his lust for riches and the ease of the flesh, and that there was just one way out of the mire for him, and that was to sell what he had and give to the poor, and deny himself and take up his cross and follow the Savior. Dante, in his vision of hell, sees there one whom he does not name, but who, he says, "made the great refusal." Most students of Dante suppose he refers to the young man who came to Jesus and whom Jesus loved, but who regretfully declined the Savior's precious invitation. It was a great refusal. It was a lost opportunity such as few men have had in this world. There must have been some great capacity for good in the young man, for Jesus, who could read character at a glance, loved him and gave him the glorious opportunity of going up higher. The love which Jesus felt for this youth, and which he so showed in his face that the disciples noticed it and wrote it down afterward, suggests to us that if he had accepted the offer and obeyed Jesus he might have become one of the most distinguished and useful of all that immortal group who have been taken

into the heart of the world, and whose names will live forever because of their fidelity to Jesus Christ. But, poor fellow, he was overthrown by the lust of the flesh.

"The lust of the eyes."

There is a fable which says that once upon a time in a dim old forest two birds lived right merrily. And behold, a child came one day, carrying a gilded cage, which he set down on a mossy bank, and around it he strewed many seeds. The birds flew down to the bank and ate the seeds greedily. Then the child strewed more seeds, this time right close to the cage. These they ate also. The next day the seeds were strewed inside the cage. Then the birds said one to another: "What means this? Is it a snare set for our destruction?" And shaking their heads doubtfully, they flew up to their perch in the tree-top and would not venture near. But having tasted the seeds and become very fond of them already, they in a day or two appeared again upon the spot. "Shall we venture in?" they said. Reason said, "No," but appetite said, "The seeds are so savory; why not have them?" So in they hopped. And in stepping about they touched a secret spring; the door flew shut with a quick rebound, and they were prisoners. Then the child stepped out from his hiding-place, took up the cage, and carried

the beautiful birds, once so blithe and gay, as captives to his home.

How clearly that gilded cage illustrates the deadly fascination of an unholy habit, which, though it seems so harmless, has yet a door of despair which shuts with tenacious hold upon its victims. There is no jailer so cruel as vice, though oftentimes it clothes itself in fascinating garments and seems like an angel of light.

The lust of the eye! What a terrible thing it has meant to our humanity! God said to our first parents that they should not eat of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," and they never would have done so if Eve had not set her eyes on it until they lusted for the fruit. The scripture says she "saw that it was good for food." The lust of the eye was followed by the lust of the flesh, by sin and banishment and endless trouble and sorrow. Ahab's "eye" lusted after Naboth's vineyard, and he let his eye continue to look at it and desire it until he could not be satisfied till Jezebel had wrought murder to obtain it for him. But it was in that same vineyard that judgment came upon him and that his own life-blood dripped from the floor of his chariot. It was Achan's "eye" that beheld the wedge of gold and lusted after it until he stole it. You are not safe for a moment, though you may not have committed any outward sin yet,

if your eyes are lusting after the sin, and your imagination is setting it before your mind in attractive pictures, and you are yielding to desires and longings for it. You may depend upon it that, unless helped of God, to-morrow or the day after you will be wallowing in the lust toward which your eyes are drawing you.

"The pride of life!" How many are destroyed by pride! To make a display in the world, to lead the fashion, to show our good looks or our sharp witticism, to fascinate some one and be the object of admiration and envy! It does not need that one be rich or beautiful or gifted in order to be subject to this temptation. It is a sin that may thrive in a garret as well as in a palace. There is always something that the devil can deceive us into being proud of, if it is only our meanness. For I have seen men who were actually proud of their sins. Some people are proud of their poor, puny, sarcastic temperaments; proud of their hardness of heart; proud that they are not easily moved to tenderness and love; proud that they are cynical. "The pride of life!" It has a thousand manifestations, and it destroys multitudes of souls. It must be thrown to the winds before one can become a true Christian. Many people refuse to come out openly on the Lord's side, to humble themselves by going to the altar and on their knees confessing

their sins and seeking forgiveness, because in some way it offends their pride. I hope there may not be anybody so foolish here to-night; for of all the rafts upon which men try to ride the rapids of trouble and death and eternity, pride is the most perishable and the most easily destroyed. And indeed all these things that are of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, are but for a little while, and soon are gone. Notice this solemn sentence, "The world passeth away and the lust thereof." The trouble about men or women who give themselves up to the world is not only that all worldly things, such as health and strength and beauty and money and fame and everything that men are fascinated by in this world are transitory and uncertain, but that if anything remains, the lust for it is destroyed, and many times we see illustrations of men and women living on after all the zest and enthusiasm of life have gone. Their lust for worldly riches and pleasures, for which they have sold their souls and rejected the Christ and disobeyed God, has died out, and they go on living poor old burned-out lives that are as joyless as they are useless. There are old stories of men who in the night received from fairy hands gifts of gold in some cave, and when the daylight came upon them what had seemed to be gold and jewels was a bundle of

withered leaves and red berries, already half de cayed, and altogether worthless. There are many things which the world counts very precious which are like the fairies' gold.

After all, anything that can be taken away from us does not really belong to us, and the glory about the Christian's joy is that it never can be taken away from us without our consent.

Now how can we overcome the world? How can we defeat the pride of life, the lust of the eyes, and the lust of the flesh? The Gospel says we can do it through the Christ dwelling in us. St. John says that when we open our hearts to the seeking Christ and he comes into our hearts and dwells there, the hope of glory, then it becomes true that he that is in us is greater than he that is in the world. I know that there are some of you here to-night that want to be Christians. You have thought about it a good deal, and you hesitate and delay because you are afraid that the world will be too strong for you. You are satisfied that in your own strength you are no match for these things that are in the world. The difficulty is that you do not take into consideration properly the fact that there is not a single invitation in the Word of God for you to undertake the Christian life in your own strength; but you are to surrender your life to the Lord Jesus Christ and he agrees

to come in and possess your thoughts, hopes, ambitions, and will, and old things shall pass away and all things shall become new. You shall put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man with his holy ideals and with his divine strength.

Paul knew what worldliness was. He had struggled with the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh and the pride of life, and he explains as clearly as it could be put in human language how he came to have victory over them. In his letter to the Philippians he says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." That is the glory of our holy Christianity, that it puts a power in a man that makes him conqueror over circumstances and over temptations coming to him through the eyes and through the flesh; and, indeed, as the scripture puts it, gives him power to resist "the world, the flesh, and the devil."

But, dear friends, we are to have this victory only through taking the conquering Christ into our own hearts. He does not become the hope of glory to us until we have opened the door and he has come into our heart's citadel and taken possession. Then we are able to say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Then your religion is spontaneous. It is not standing on guard merely.

It is not an empty ceremony, or a Sunday drill. It is the upspringing of the fountain of the water of life. It is the overflowing of a glad heart. It is the pure life gushing forth from the pure heart which is mastered and controlled by the conquering Christ.

The story is told of a boy, only six years old, who was once sailing with his father down the Danube. All day long they had been sailing past crumbling ruins, frowning castles, cloisters hidden away among the crags, towering cliffs, quiet villages nestled in sunny valleys, and here and there a deep gorge that opened back from the gliding river; its loneliness and stillness stirring the boy's heart like some dim and vast cathedral. They stopped at night at a cloister, and the father took little Wolfgang into the chapel to see the organ. It was the first large organ he had ever seen, and his face lit up with delight, and every motion and attitude of his figure expressed a wonderful reverence. "Father," said the boy, "let me play." Well pleased, the father complied. Then the little Wolfgang pushed aside the stool, and when his father had filled the great bellows, the elfin organist stood upon the pedals. How the deep tones awoke the sombre stillness of the old church! The organ seemed some great, uncouth creature, roaring for joy at the caress of the marvelous child. The

monks, eating their supper in the refectory, heard it, and dropped knife and fork in astonishment. The organist of the brotherhood was among them, but never had he played with such power. They listened; some crossed themselves; till the prior rose up and hastened into the chapel. The others followed; but, when they looked up into the organ loft, lo! there was no organist to be seen, though the deep tones still massed themselves in new harmonies and made the stone arches thrill with their power. "It is the evil one," cried one of the monks, drawing closer to his companions and giving a scared look over his shoulder at the darkness of the aisle. "It is a miracle," said another. But when the boldest of them mounted the stairs of the organ-loft, he stood as if petrified with amazement. There was the tiny figure treading from pedal to pedal and at the same time clutching at the keys above with his little hands. He heard nothing, saw nothing beside; his eyes beamed, and his whole face lighted up with impassioned joy. Louder and fuller rose the harmonies, streaming forth in swelling billows, till at last they seemed to reach a sunny shore, on which they broke; and then a whispering ripple of faintest melody lingered a moment in the air, like the last murmur of a wind-harp, and all was still. The boy was John Wolfgang Mozart, one of the greatest musicians

that ever lived. It was his inheritance. The music was in his very blood, it leaped to the ends of his fingers as if by intuition.

My dear friend, it is to that sort of a Christian life I call you. Not a poor, starved life, cramped and fettered; not a life that fences you in from life's sweetest joys. No, indeed! But a life that shall lift you up and exalt you beyond your fondest dreams; a life that shall touch every pleasure that is pure and good with a sweetness that is more beautiful than the earth; a life that shall glorify every human fellowship because there shall fall over it the glorious halo of immortality; a life full of courage and victory, because your heart shall be inspired and your arm nerved with the strength of the indwelling Christ. You will lead a life good and pure and noble, not because you must, not because you are a slave under the lash, but as Wolfgang Mozart made music, because it leaps from your inmost soul and overflows in face and speech and deed from your consecrated heart.

THE END.